



# CHCDIV002

Promote Aboriginal  
and/or  
Torres Strait Islander  
cultural safety



# **CHCDIV002**

## **Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety**

**Release 1**

**Learner Guide**

Aspire Version 1.1

**Acknowledgement:** Aspire Learning Resources wishes to acknowledge the cultural input of Tania Johnson in the production of this Learner Guide. Tania is a proud Kooma woman living and working on DjaDja Wurrung Country who works with the DjaDja Wurrung community in rural and city areas. She has experience in a range of community services, providing case management, family violence support and assistance building stronger communities and families in regional Victoria. We are grateful for her contribution.

**CHCDIV002 Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety, Release 1**

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# Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Before you begin</b>  | <b>v</b>  |
| <b>Topic 1: Identify cultural safety issues in the workplace</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| 1A Identify the impact of cultural factors on service delivery and issues that influence relationships and communication with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples | 2         |
| 1B Establish key aspects of cultural safety in consultation with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples  | 21        |
| 1C Evaluate the extent to which cultural safety is integrated in own work and workplace  | 37        |
| Summary  | 42        |
| Learning Checkpoint 1  | 43        |
| <b>Topic 2: Model cultural safety in own work</b>  | <b>49</b> |
| 2A Ensure work practices are grounded in awareness of one's own cultural bias  | 50        |
| 2B Reflect awareness of own and other cultures and show respect for cultural differences among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples                                   | 55        |
| 2C Engage with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interpreters and colleagues as cultural brokers  | 60        |
| Summary  | 65        |
| Learning Checkpoint 2  | 66        |
| <b>Topic 3: Develop strategies for improved cultural safety</b>  | <b>69</b> |
| 3A Support and promote effective partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities   | 70        |
| 3B Document ways to support the delivery of culturally safe services and programs to increase participation  | 76        |
| 3C Integrate strategies that encourage self-determination and community control  | 83        |
| Summary  | 87        |
| Learning Checkpoint 3  | 88        |



|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Topic 4: Evaluate cultural safety strategies</b>                                  | <b>93</b>  |
| 4A Agree on outcomes to measure cultural safety strategies                           | 94         |
| 4B Involve Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in evaluations           | 99         |
| 4C Evaluate programs and services against the desired outcomes and revise strategies | 102        |
| Summary  | 107        |
| Learning Checkpoint 4  | 108        |
| <b>Glossary</b>  | <b>111</b> |

Aspire acknowledges the homelands of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pays our respect to Country





# Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCDIV002 Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety*, Release 1.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program.

## How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete.

| Feature of the Learner Guide | How you can use each feature   |  |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Learning content             | Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake. |  |
| Examples                     | These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.  |  |
| Practice Tasks               | Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.   |  |
| Callouts                     | Callouts reiterate key learning points to help students revise for their assessments.  |  |
| Weblinks                     | Weblinks provide learners with additional content to contextualise their learning and develop their understanding.   |  |
| Videos                       | Videos provide a visual reference of key concepts to aid comprehension and guide learner exploration. Each video is accessed by a QR code in the Learner Guide (or a button in the eBook version) for ease of access.  | <br> |
| Glossary/margin definitions  | Key terms are defined where they first appear to help consolidate understanding. A glossary of terms is provided at the end of the Learner Guide to assist learner revision of key concepts.   |  |
| Summaries                    | Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.   |  |
| Learning Checkpoints         | There are Learning Checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.  |  |
| Case studies                 | Case studies are interspersed throughout the learning content to provide a workplace setting that contextualises key concepts.   |  |

## Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

These skills are listed below:

| Foundation skill area     | Foundation skill description   |
|---------------------------|--|
| Reading                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents</li> <li>Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology</li> <li>Interpreting key information in relevant documents</li> <li>Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation</li> </ul> |
| Writing                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents</li> <li>Communicating through written letters, email and online</li> <li>Recording progress; reporting incidents</li> </ul>   |
| Oral communication        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarifying instructions</li> <li>Providing information</li> <li>Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution</li> <li>Using body language to model desired behaviour and responding to others' body language</li> </ul>   |
| Numeracy                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance</li> <li>Interpreting measurements</li> </ul>   |
| Learning                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities</li> <li>Managing your work and seeing how well you are going</li> <li>Making goals for yourself at work</li> <li>Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement</li> </ul>          |
| Problem-solving           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying problems</li> <li>Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes</li> <li>Reviewing the outcome</li> </ul>  |
| Initiative and enterprise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas</li> <li>Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something</li> <li>Making suggestions to improve work</li> </ul>   |
| Teamwork                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport</li> </ul>   |



| Foundation skill area   | Foundation skill description  |
|-------------------------|---|
| Planning and organising | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning your workload and commitments</li> <li>• Implementing tasks</li> <li>• Completing work on time</li> <li>• Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks</li> </ul>                               |
| Self-management         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and applying decision-making processes</li> <li>• Reviewing your behaviour and the impact of your decisions</li> </ul>   |
| Technology              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely</li> <li>• Accessing, organising and presenting information</li> <li>• Using equipment correctly and safely</li> </ul> |

Note: Not every unit of competency will contain all foundation skills.

## What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

| Topic  | Key outcome  | Rate your confidence in each section   |
|--|--|--|
| Topic 1 Identify cultural safety issues in the workplace | 1A Identify the impact of cultural factors on service delivery and issues that influence relationships and communication with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
|  | 1B Establish key aspects of cultural safety in consultation with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples  | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
|  | 1C Evaluate the extent to which cultural safety is integrated in own work and workplace  | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| Topic 2 Model cultural safety in own work                | 2A Ensure work practices are grounded in awareness of one's own cultural bias  | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
|  | 2B Reflect awareness of own and other cultures and show respect for cultural differences among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
|  | 2C Engage with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interpreters and colleagues as cultural brokers  | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |



| Topic   | Key outcome  | Rate your confidence in each section   |
|---|--|--|
| Topic 3 Develop strategies for improved cultural safety | 3A Support and promote effective partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
|   | 3B Document ways to support the delivery of culturally safe services and programs to increase participation      | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
|   | 3C Integrate strategies that encourage self-determination and community control                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| Topic 4 Evaluate cultural safety strategies             | 4A Agree on outcomes to measure cultural safety strategies   | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
|   | 4B Involve Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in evaluations                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
|   | 4C Evaluate programs and services against desired outcomes and revise strategies                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident<br><input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |



Please note: This Learner Guide refers to several terms used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

- Indigenous: Can refer to all people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Non-Indigenous: Refers to Australians who are not Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- First Nations peoples or First Australians: Refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Traditional custodians: Can be used to refer to the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community in your local area

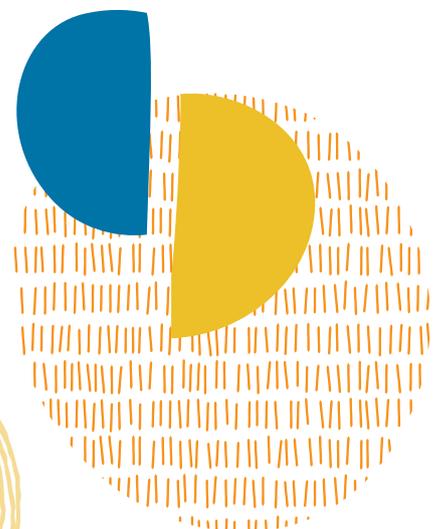
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this Learner Guide may contain images of people who have died.





## Topic 1: Identify cultural safety issues in the workplace

- 1A Identify the impact of cultural factors on service delivery and issues that influence relationships and communication with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- 1B Establish key aspects of cultural safety in consultation with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- 1C Evaluate the extent to which cultural safety is integrated in own work and workplace



# 1A

## Identify the impact of cultural factors on service delivery and issues that influence relationships and communication with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples

**Cultural factors have a powerful impact upon service delivery.**

Culture can be defined as a way of life; a collection of ideas, customs and social practices for a particular group. The cultural practices of minority groups are often more noticeable than those of the people who make up the dominant culture in a country. People from the dominant culture often find it difficult to describe their culture because it is so familiar to them and is ingrained in how their society operates.

Culture often combines both easily observed and invisible practices. Sometimes this is described as a cultural iceberg. The easily observed aspects of a culture sit on top, above sea level; however, the larger part of the iceberg that reflects entrenched attitudes and ways of thinking and doing things, is below sea level and not so easy to see.

The delivery of services within health systems and community services can impact on the culture of the person receiving the service. Likewise, a person's culture influences their communication and relationships with organisations and the workers who are delivering services.

The history and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples\* in Australia means that workers and organisations must be especially sensitive to the potential impact of **cultural factors** on service delivery.

### Cultural factors

Shared characteristics of a group of people.

**\*Note:** In this Learner Guide, we use the term 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' or 'First Nations Australians' to refer to the wide range of nations, cultures and languages across mainland Australia and throughout the Torres Strait.



## Culture and history

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are the oldest living continuous cultures in the world: they have lived in Australia for over 60,000 years. While some aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures have changed over time, other aspects have been in existence and maintained for tens of thousands of years. Their origin is described by the Dreaming belief system. Ancestral beings shaped the landscape of Australia through their actions and brought life to the first people and their culture.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been living in Australia for at least 65,000 years.

Dreaming stories are not based in the past, rather they are 'outside of time' and dreaming stories give meaning to every aspect of life. The Dreaming is difficult to explain in the English language and has often been misunderstood by non-Indigenous Australians who interpret it as a set of creation myths and legends.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have unique, rich and diverse cultures. Focusing on local culture as told by traditional custodians helps us to understand:

- the close relationship that traditional custodians have with the land they live on
- how they value the climate, flora, fauna, landforms and other natural resources
- that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Australians, which means they are the original owners and custodians of the land.

Many local councils provide information online about local Aboriginal peoples and communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations also provide information about their own peoples and communities.

Here is an example of an Aboriginal-led organisation that provides information about their own peoples and communities. The Larrakia people are the traditional owners of the Darwin region in the Northern Territory: [aspirelr.link/about-larrakia-people](https://aspirelr.link/about-larrakia-people)

### Video: Dust Echoes

Dust Echoes is a series of 12 animated Dreamtime stories from Central Arnhem Land made in collaboration with the Djilpin Aboriginal Arts Corporation: [aspirelr.link/dust-echoes-videos](https://aspirelr.link/dust-echoes-videos)

Notice the diversity of dance, dress and tools used by the various groups.



## Diversity of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures

There are two distinct Indigenous cultural groups in Australia: Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The term Aboriginal is used to refer to the nations and custodians of mainland Australia and many islands, including Tasmania.

The term Torres Strait Islander is used to refer to the peoples who live in the 274 islands between the tip of Cape York in Queensland and the south-west coast of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Many Torres Strait Islander peoples live on the Australian mainland. Torres Strait Islanders have diverse local cultures that are distinct from mainland Australian First Nations peoples. There are five island groups and each has shared traditions shaped by environmental factors, such as climate and soil type. Together, Torres Strait Islanders have a shared **cultural identity** as a sea-faring people, using detailed knowledge of star constellations for navigation.

Among these two groups, there is significant cultural diversity. This diversity is evident across multiple domains of life, including the following:

### Cultural identity

A person's self-perception of belonging to a social group, such as a particular nationality, religion, ethnicity or social class.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Customs</b>         | Different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups have different totems which they are responsible for, as well as their own sacred sites.<br><br>Different groups also have different methods for gathering food such as fish traps, subsistence agriculture and hunting. |
| <b>Languages</b>       | Prior to colonisation, over 250 different languages were spoken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, all with comprehensive vocabularies and intricate grammatical structures.   |
| <b>Laws</b>            | Laws and codes of conduct regarding marriage, coming of age, death, leadership and etiquette differ from one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community to the next.  |
| <b>Songs and dance</b> | Even in a single region, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have diverse songs and dance cycles. Different communities use different body paint, artefacts and instruments.  |

Sources: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/indigenous-australians-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people> <http://visitsydneyaustralia.com.au/heritage-aboriginal-clans.html>; <https://shareourpride.org.au/sections/our-culture/index.html>

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has produced a map of Indigenous Australia which represents the language, social or nation groups of Aboriginal Australia: [aspirelr.link/aiatsis-indigenous-aus-map](https://aiatsis.gov.au/indigenous-australia-map)

**Video: Dancerites**

Dancerites is an annual First Nations dance festival. This video of highlights from the Dancerites competition shows the incredible diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through dance. [aspirelr.link/yt-dancerites](https://aspirelr.link/yt-dancerites)

**Change of perspectives**

Many non-Indigenous Australians have been given incorrect information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, and in some cases have not been given any information at all. Often, non-Indigenous people have only learnt about the desert cultures in northern Australia and have been given the impression that these cultures are simplistic and less developed than in other countries. For example, Aboriginal culture was often taught by pointing out its strangeness when compared with Western cultural practices.

Here are some common misconceptions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures that may be encountered today.

| Misconception   | Reality  |
|---|--|
| Aboriginal peoples were hunter-gatherers who did not engage in agriculture. | Recent research by scholars such as Bruce Pascoe has shown that early settlers suppressed information about Aboriginal agriculture and permanent dwellings.  |
| The Aboriginal way of life was similar all over Australia.                  | Aboriginal practices depended on local environmental factors, as well as social and cultural ideas that developed over time. Early European collections of artefacts often did not record the specific place of origin, making it difficult for objects to be returned to their communities, and to understand different local cultures. Many local names of flora and fauna have been lost. |
| Aboriginal societies were unchanged for thousands of years.                 | Aboriginal Australia was a 'continuous culture', which means it had little to no influence from outside Australia. It does not mean that societies did not evolve or change. In reality, Aboriginal culture was constantly adapting and changing with new ideas and discoveries.   |



## Kinship and laws

The concept of kinship is central to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society. It is through their lines of descent, as well as their clans and language groups, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have connections to country.

“When we say country we might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area and in saying so we may mean something more than just a place; somewhere on the map. We are not necessarily referring to place in a geographical sense. But we are talking about the whole of the landscape, not just the places on it.”

Professor Mick Dodson AM, United Nations International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Protection of the Environment, Khabarovsk, Russian Federation, August 2007

### Kinship

Systems that determine an individual's responsibilities towards other people, the land and natural resources.

The **kinship** system is very important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities because it determines both a person's relationship and responsibilities to others and their responsibilities to the land and natural resources.

Traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family structures are different from typical modern Western family structures. While Western family structures are centred on the nuclear family, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family structures incorporate extended family.

Law and culture are central to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. **Elders** play a critical role in maintaining law and culture in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander laws help maintain social cohesion and standards of behaviour in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. When these laws are undermined or lost, it can have a negative impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.

Although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must abide by mainstream Western laws, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law remains a central feature of daily life for many peoples and communities.

### Elder

Someone who has gained recognition as a custodian of Country, law and spiritual wellbeing and who has permission to disclose knowledge and beliefs.

## Impact of European settlement

**When Europeans colonised in Australia in 1788, they viewed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as uncivilised and incapable of land ownership.**

According to the Europeans who colonised Australia, the country was *terra nullius*; a Latin term meaning *land belonging to no one*.

The European settlers used the concept of terra nullius to justify their occupation of lands that did not belong to them and their inhumane treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Here is a description of some of the impacts of European settlement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Dispossession</b></p>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were driven out of or forcibly removed from their land by Europeans during colonisation.</li> <li>• The loss of land led to the destruction of cultures. It also cut people off from the resources they used to support themselves and fractured family and community bonds.</li> <li>• Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families were sent to missions where they were prohibited from participating in their traditional cultural practices and from speaking their own language.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Disease</b></p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Europeans brought diseases to Australia which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples did not have immunity to such as smallpox, measles and influenza.</li> <li>• These diseases led to multiple waves of death among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Many survivors were left without family or community leaders, resulting in the fracturing of important bonds and the loss of cultural knowledge.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Silencing of languages</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the time the British invaded Australia, more than 250 Aboriginal languages ('First languages') were spoken, with different dialects within each language group.</li> <li>• First languages in Australia did not simply 'fade away', but were actively quashed by governments and institutions such as mission staff and schools. Because languages carry cultural knowledge, the loss of language leads to a loss of culture.</li> <li>• In the present day, 120 First languages are still spoken in Australia. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are working to revive First languages.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Population decline</b></p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to the First Fleet arriving, roughly 750,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lived in Australia. By 1930 there were about 60,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people left living in Australia.</li> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now make up approximately 3% of the Australian population, which equates to almost 800,000 people.</li> </ul>   |

The impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continues to the present day and invasion, dispossession and marginalisation have led to intergenerational trauma. This has been exacerbated by unjust and ineffective government policies, such as the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. Known as The Stolen Generations period, this began in the late 1800s and continued until the 1970s.

The significant and ongoing impacts of colonisation have created considerable challenges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a lower life expectancy than non-Indigenous Australians, higher rates of mental health difficulties and are more likely to experience homelessness and housing insecurity.

## Example

### Stolen Generations

The following is an account by Aboriginal woman Deborah Cheetham:

“My ancestors come from the rich green land of the Yorta Yorta nation, which embraces both sides of the Murray River. We call this river Dhungala, and the Dhungala has been home to the Yorta Yorta people for more than 60,000 years. My grandfather James came to Yorta Yorta country from Wallaga Lake in the early 1930s and married a local girl. Her name was Frances McGee, although she was fondly known as Sissy. Together they had seven children, the youngest of whom was my mother Monica; while Colin, Betty, Freddie, Ernest, Madeline and the eldest, Jimmy, were my uncles and aunts. I am one of nine children myself.

“It would be fabulous to tell you some hilarious story about growing up with so many brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts and countless cousins, but I can't. You see, I didn't grow up with them. For the first 30 years of my life I didn't know anything about them. At just three weeks of age, I was taken from Monica.”

#### Video: 'My people die young in this country...'

This video features Australian journalist, Stan Grant, a Wiradjuri elder, talking powerfully about the history and ongoing impact of colonisation on First Nations Australians: [aspirelr.link/yt-colonisation-impact](https://www.aspirelr.link/yt-colonisation-impact)

Which of the points covered in the video resonate with you most?



## Unequal power relations

**The history of unequal power relations between First Nations Australians and non-Indigenous people in Australia is evident in a range of areas.**

The history of unequal power relations began when the British invaded Australia, then continued throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and into the present day.



Here are some examples of these unequal power relations:

| Examples of past and present unequal power relations between First Nations Australians and non-Indigenous people in Australia |  |
|---|--|
|    | <p><b>Unequal pay</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up until the mid-1960s, many industries paid Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers one-third of what they paid non-Indigenous workers.</li> </ul>   |
|    | <p><b>Unequal voting rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were prohibited by law from voting at federal elections until 1962.</li> </ul>   |
|    | <p><b>Unequal land rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior to 1992, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples did not have native title rights to the lands that were taken from them.</li> </ul>  |
|    | <p><b>Unequal access to resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of systemic barriers make it more difficult for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access resources such as education and housing, which has a negative impact on their health, wellbeing and available opportunities.</li> </ul> |
|    | <p><b>Unequal political representation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been under-represented in politics, especially federal parliament.</li> </ul>   |
|    | <p><b>Unequal rates of incarceration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make up less than 3% of the total Australian population but constitute 27% of the prison population.</li> </ul>  |

Sources: <https://www.atui.org.au/union-history-blog/the-long-campaign-by-indigenous-workers-for-equal-pay-and-the-1966-decision> <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/indigenous-australians-right-to-vote> <https://www.nma.gov.au/explore/features/indigenous-rights/civil-rights/equal-wages> <https://www.alrc.gov.au/publication/pathways-to-justice-inquiry-into-the-incarceration-rate-of-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-alrc-report-133/executive-summary-15/disproportionate-incarceration-rate/>

## Impacts of racism

**Racism** includes harassment, abuse and humiliation of a person because of their skin colour, ethnicity, race or culture. Racism can also involve name-calling, hurtful jokes and excluding people from groups or activities.

Not all racism is obvious or visible. For example, an employer might look through a list of job applicants and decide not to interview candidates who have a non-Anglo surname.

Racism is not just between people, it can also be embedded in systems, policies and procedures. Government policies can be racist; for example, in the early 20th century, the Australian Government had a White Australia Policy which was designed to stop people who were not European from migrating to Australia.

**Racism**  
Prejudice, discrimination or hatred towards someone because they are part of a racial or ethnic group, typically one that is marginalised.

Research shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience racism in a range of settings including at work, in public places, on the sports field, and in the provision of goods and services.

Racism has a negative impact upon a person’s physical and mental health. For example, the psychological distress that results from experiencing racism can increase the risks of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Furthermore, the stress associated with experiences of racism can elevate a person’s blood pressure and weaken their immune system.

Fear of racism can impact an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person’s willingness to engage with health and community services. In other words, even if a particular service has never been racist, an Aboriginal person might be unwilling to use it if they have experienced racism in similar settings.

**Video: Silence is violence. Complacency is complicity.**

This video features the actor and writer Meyne Wyatt delivering a speech about racism taken from his autobiographical play *City of Gold: aspire!*. [link/yt-meyne-wyatt-racism](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=link/yt-meyne-wyatt-racism)



## Experience of discrimination

**Discrimination**

The act of excluding or treating a person differently based solely on an attribute such as disability, age, gender, race or sexual orientation.

To discriminate against someone means to treat them unfairly or favour others over them.

**Discrimination** incorporates:

- direct discrimination where a person is treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation because of a factor such as their age, gender, ethnicity or disability
- indirect discrimination where a condition, requirement or practice appears to treat people equally but instead disadvantages some people because of a factor such as their age, gender, ethnicity or disability.

**Lived experience**

A person’s personal knowledge about their own situation gained through direct, firsthand experience, or through cultural or generational exposure to discrimination, trauma or other experiences.

An example of direct discrimination is a company refusing to employ someone because they wear a head covering for religious reasons.

An example of indirect discrimination is a company instituting a policy stating that employees cannot wear hats or head coverings at work, as this disadvantages people who wear head coverings for religious reasons.

In Australia, it is unlawful to discriminate against people on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, disability or impairment, marital status, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs. Many people experience discrimination through first-hand experience. This is referred to as their **lived experience**.



Just as a fear of racism can result in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being reluctant to engage with health and community services, so too can a fear of discrimination.

The Human Rights Commission provides numerous case studies describing specific real-life examples of discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and how complaints about discrimination were resolved: [aspirelr.link/aboriginal-discrimination-case-studies](https://www.hrc.gov.au/about-us/case-studies/aboriginal-discrimination-case-studies)

## Engagement with services

Australian institutions such as hospitals, schools, community services and government organisations operate according to Western beliefs and values.

For example, our healthcare systems are built upon a biomedical model. The biomedical model focuses on the physical and biological aspects of disease and illness, and is associated with the diagnosis, cure and treatment of disease.

The biomedical model contrasts with non-Western holistic understandings of health which consider the physical, mental, spiritual and social factors that contribute to health and wellbeing. Although some doctors and health institutions might accept or even encourage holistic understandings of health, those perspectives are considered 'alternative', and the dominant model is still the biomedical model.

Western views are also embedded in the way these institutions operate. For example, hospitals often have policies regarding close family that determine who is allowed to visit a person who is seriously ill. From a Western perspective, close family is one's nuclear family: husband, wife, partner or children. However, a person who might be considered as distant family in Western culture, such as a second cousin, might be considered close family by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

The dominance of Western culture in our institutions, along with the ongoing effects of European settlement, racism and discrimination, can alienate people who have different values and beliefs, and impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's engagement with services.



| Impacts on engagement                                | Description of impacts on engagement   |
|--|--|
| <b>Reluctance to attend and engage with services</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fear of racism, discrimination or government intervention can cause Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be reluctant to attend health and community services.</li><li>• The history of unequal power relations between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people can contribute to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's lack of trust in non-Indigenous service providers.</li><li>• The continuation of unequal power relations into the present day can cause Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people not to share information with service providers because they do not think they will be heard, do not think their views will be respected or fear negative consequences from sharing information about themselves and/or their families.</li></ul> |
| <b>Difficulties with access</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Due to a lack of resources, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may have difficulties accessing health and community services.</li><li>• For example, families experiencing financial difficulties may not be able to afford services.</li><li>• Even when services are free or low-cost, the expense of getting to the service might impact on engagement with services. This can be especially difficult for families living in rural and remote areas, and those with poor transport infrastructure.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Confusion and/or alienation</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Services can be confusing even for people who come from Anglo backgrounds. For example, it can be difficult to find your way around a large hospital.</li><li>• Health and community services can also be confusing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For example, people whose first language is not English may not understand the terminology that service providers use.</li><li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can also feel alienated when their needs, experiences and perspectives are overlooked or ignored in a service. For example, disregarding holistic understandings of health is alienating for those who do not subscribe to a biomedical understanding of health.</li></ul>   |



| Impacts on engagement                           | Description of impacts on engagement   |
|---|--|
| Frustration                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone, regardless of their cultural background, can get frustrated when they are engaging with services.</li> <li>• Depending upon your perspective, a person's frustration with services and the service system might be entirely warranted or unwarranted.</li> <li>• One factor that may cause Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to experience frustration when engaging with services is having to constantly explain important cultural considerations.</li> <li>• They may feel frustrated by service providers who do not take responsibility for learning about their culture because it is then up to them (the clients) to educate them.</li> </ul>   |
| A desire to maintain cultural integrity         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should not be expected to go against their cultural beliefs and traditions when accessing health and community services.</li> <li>• For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should have the right to request treatments or interventions that align with their cultural values and turn down treatments or interventions that conflict with their values.</li> <li>• The desire to maintain cultural integrity is understandable given the history of policies such as <b>assimilation</b> in Australia which required Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to replace their own cultural values, beliefs and traditions with the values, beliefs and traditions of non-Indigenous white Australians.</li> <li>• The ideology of assimilation was common in Australia and informed policies (including the policies that led to the Stolen Generation) and other colonised countries including New Zealand and Canada.</li> </ul> |
| A desire to engage with their own organisations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will prefer to engage with Indigenous-led health and community services organisations because of the potential for cultural misunderstandings and other problems, such as racism and judgement, when engaging with mainstream health and community services.</li> </ul>   |

**Assimilation**  
 An ideology founded upon the idea that to enjoy the same standard of living as non-Indigenous people, Indigenous people needed to adopt European traditions and beliefs.

Sources: <https://healthbulletin.org.au/articles/twelve-factors-that-can-influence-the-participation-of-aboriginal-people-in-disability/>; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7999419/>

## Example

### Identify the potential impact of cultural factors on service delivery

Kristy is a 29-year-old Aboriginal woman who grew up in the southern suburbs of Sydney with her mother, father and two brothers.

Kristy's mother is part of the Stolen Generation, taken from her family at the age of three.

Kristy's mother was nervous when she took her children to the doctor. It is only now that Kristy is older that her mother tells her she was afraid she would be accused of neglecting her children if they were ill and they would be taken from her, just as she was from her family. "I only told the doctors what they needed to know," Kristy's mother explains. "Then I got out of there, as soon as we were done."

Kristy thinks this might explain why she gets nervous and feels anxious about going to the doctor. She suspects that when she was a child, she subconsciously picked up on her mother's anxiety about doctors.

## Influences on communication and relationships

### **A range of factors can influence communication and relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people.**

Some of these factors are common to cross-cultural interactions, with the most obvious factor being language differences. In addition to these common factors, the unique history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and non-Indigenous communities in Australia means that there are additional factors to consider when it comes to their communication and relationships with each other.

For example, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may find it difficult to trust non-Indigenous organisations and institutions because of their own or their families' experiences of unfair, unjust, racist or discriminatory treatment.

Here is a description of some critical factors that influence communication and relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people:



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Language</b></p>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hundreds of First Nations languages and dialects are spoken in present-day Australia.</li> <li>• About 10% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people speak a First Nations language and, for some, English is not their first language.</li> <li>• Communication can be impacted when a client and a service provider speak different languages.</li> <li>• Interpreters for people who speak First Nations languages are often not available, even in situations where they are clearly essential such as serious court cases and medical emergencies.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Cultural rules, norms and values</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural rules, norms and values affect how people communicate.</li> <li>• For example, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people may have different attitudes and responses to silence. An Aboriginal person might be silent during a conversation because they want to listen to others' opinions before they offer their own. A non-Indigenous person might interpret that silence as an indication that they have not understood what has been communicated.</li> <li>• An awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures can help service providers communicate effectively and develop positive relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.</li> <li>• Some common terms, such as 'Indigenous Australian', are offensive to some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Using incorrect or offensive terminology when working with clients, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, can impact on communication and the process of rapport-building.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Trust</b></p>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust is key to effective communication and relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous services.</li> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may be wary of non-Indigenous services because of previous disempowering, negative or harmful experiences with those service systems.</li> <li>• Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be reluctant to talk to service providers they do not know.</li> <li>• Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may be reluctant to seek help from a local run service provider because the people that work there are family. They may not want to share personal information in case people in their community find out.</li> <li>• Again, for effective communication to occur and for positive relationships to be established, it may take time for a service provider to develop trust and rapport with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander client.</li> </ul>  |



|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Respect</b></p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrating respect facilitates effective communication with clients, but people from different cultures show respect in different ways.</li> <li>• Actions which are especially important for demonstrating respect when communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people include the following:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being mindful of your non-verbal communication</li> <li>- Being mindful of the other person’s body language; for example, modify your eye contact if they are avoiding eye contact with you</li> <li>- Avoiding discussions in open or public spaces</li> <li>- Being conscious about personal space. Standing too close to someone you do not know or of the opposite gender may make them feel uncomfortable</li> <li>- Seeking permission and explaining why you need to touch a client</li> <li>- Being prepared to leave the room if a matter needs to be discussed in private by a family</li> <li>- Respecting the critical role of Elders and paying appropriate respect to their status</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Empowerment</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowerment is a critical aspect of effective communication and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</li> <li>• Like any other client group that you work with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to participate meaningfully in decisions that impact on them. In fact, this is even more important when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, because in the past their right to <b>self-determination</b> has consistently been denied.</li> <li>• Do not make assumptions about what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want or need. Respect that they know what is best for them, their families and communities.</li> </ul>   |

**Self-determination**  
 A person’s right to have control over their own life and make independent choices about decisions that affect them.

Source: [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/b9a2f58042371fd89d6ffdef0dac2aff/SA+Health+Guide+to+Engaging+with+Aboriginal+People.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-b9a2f58042371fd89d6ffdef0dac2aff-nKPZv-t](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/b9a2f58042371fd89d6ffdef0dac2aff/SA+Health+Guide+to+Engaging+with+Aboriginal+People.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-b9a2f58042371fd89d6ffdef0dac2aff-nKPZv-t); <https://theconversation.com/the-state-of-australias-indigenous-languages-and-how-we-can-help-people-speak-them-more-often-109662>

## Impact of trauma

When someone is traumatised, they feel so overwhelmed by an experience that they cannot come to terms with it. Traumatic events can cause long-lasting harm, especially when they occur during childhood.

**Trauma**  
 The response to a distressing event or experience that can affect a person’s ability to cope and function.

Everyone has different reactions to **trauma**; however, common impacts on an individual include:

- flashbacks
- panic attacks
- disassociation



- physical health problems, such as chronic illness
- difficulty maintaining friendships and relationships
- difficulty trusting other people.

Trauma can also impact upon people's cognitive abilities.

|   |   |
|---|---|
|    | <p><b>Decision-making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People's thinking can be affected by trauma, including their ability to plan and make decisions.</li> </ul>  |
|    | <p><b>Communicating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People may feel less able to connect with others when they are affected by trauma. They may have a sense of being detached from everyone.</li> <li>• People who are affected by trauma may find it difficult to maintain friendships and relationships.</li> </ul> |
|   | <p><b>Understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma can affect people's ability to concentrate and think clearly and, thereby, their ability to understand information.</li> </ul>  |
|  | <p><b>The ability to retain information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma can impact upon a person's short-term memory and their ability to absorb information.</li> </ul>  |

Sources: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/trauma-and-families> <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/trauma/effects-of-trauma/>

## Trauma and health

Trauma impacts directly and indirectly on a person's health and wellbeing. A person who has experienced a violent incident, for example, might be physically injured as a result. Trauma does not need to be from a violent incident to have a negative impact on a person's health. For example, trauma can increase the risk of developing some chronic health problems.

If a person is having difficulty making decisions, communicating, understanding and retaining information, this can also contribute to poor health. Indeed, high rates of trauma among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities offer some explanation for their increased risk of developing certain health problems compared to non-Indigenous Australians.

For example, if a person has difficulty communicating their symptoms to a doctor, they may not receive a correct diagnosis. Similarly, if they have difficulty understanding or retaining information, they might find it difficult to follow a treatment regime recommended by a health professional. Moreover, if a person has difficulty making decisions, they may find it difficult to participate meaningfully in their own care.



## Intergenerational trauma

### Intergenerational trauma

Trauma that is passed on from one generation to the next.

**Intergenerational trauma** is passed on through generations via parenting practices, violence, substance misuse and mental health difficulties.

For example, a grandmother who was taken from her family as a child may have mental health difficulties due to her childhood experiences, which made it difficult for her to meet her son's needs. As a result of not having his needs met, the son might then go on to develop a substance misuse problem which affects his ability to meet his daughter's needs, and so on.

Intergenerational trauma can be experienced in any family or community, regardless of their cultural background. Intergenerational trauma within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities is the result of colonisation and its associated impacts.

### Video: Intergenerational trauma

To learn more about intergenerational trauma among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities watch this animation that outlines how trauma is passed down from one generation to another: [aspirelr.link/intergenerational-trauma](https://aspirelr.link/intergenerational-trauma)



## Practice Task 1

### Question 1

Briefly outline at least two impacts of European settlement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



**Question 2**

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| a. Prior to colonisation, over 250 different languages were spoken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.                              | Yes / No |
| b. Until 1962, it was illegal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to vote in federal elections.                                      | Yes / No |
| c. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who lived on missions were encouraged to speak their own language.                                | Yes / No |
| d. Racism can have a negative impact on a person’s mental health.   | Yes / No |
| e. In Australia, it is unlawful to discriminate against someone because they are Aboriginal.  | Yes / No |
| f. Doctors working in Australia’s healthcare system routinely reject holistic understandings of health.   | Yes / No |
| g. Dominant Western views within health and community services systems and structures can alienate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. | Yes / No |

**Question 3**

Identify two cultural factors that may impact on an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person’s engagement with health and community services.



**Question 4**

Identify two factors that impact upon the communication and relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and service providers.

**Question 5**

Which of the following can be affected by trauma? Tick all that apply.

- Decision-making
- Hearing
- Communicating
- Remembering
- Problem solving
- Understanding

**Question 6**

Briefly outline how the impact of trauma can contribute to poor health among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

# 1B

## Establish key aspects of cultural safety in consultation with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples

**Cultural safety relates to creating an environment that is safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.**

In a culturally safe environment, individuals, organisations and systems are:

- aware of the impact of their own culture and values on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- committed to creating and maintaining an environment where all people are treated in a culturally respectful manner.

To establish key aspects of **cultural safety** in your organisation, you will need to consult with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

### Features of culturally safe environments

There are three key features of a culturally safe workplace or service.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Knowledge and respect for self  | Awareness of how one's own cultural values, knowledge and attitudes are formed and how they affect other people<br>Taking responsibility to address one's own <b>unconscious bias</b> , racism and discrimination                                  |
| Knowledge and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples                   | Knowledge of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and cultures<br>Having the skills and attitudes required to work effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and cultures |
| A commitment to redesigning organisations and systems to reduce racism and discrimination | Strategic and institutional change to abolish barriers to optimal outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples   |

#### Cultural safety

An environment that is void of power imbalance and where shared respect, shared meaning and shared knowledge of others' experiences is promoted.

#### Unconscious bias

Subconsciously forming social stereotypes about certain people and expressing these.

In a culturally safe environment, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's identities and experiences are not:

- denied
- challenged
- assaulted.

Fundamental principles underpinning cultural safety include:

- shared respect
- shared knowledge and experience
- shared learning
- dignity
- listening.

## Example

### Establish key aspects of cultural safety in consultation

Damian is a 15-year-old school student who grew up with his mother in a tight-knit family that traces their ancestry back to Ireland. Damian's father is Aboriginal, but he has never met him and he is not sure where his father's family comes from.

Damian attends a weekly support program to help him with problems he is having at school. When he mentions to the facilitator of the program that he is interested in finding out more about his Aboriginal father, the facilitator replies, "Are you sure that is a good idea, Damian? You are just starting to get your life back on track. You grew up with a great family. Why not focus on what you have, rather than what you do not have?"

Damian follows the facilitator's advice. At a sensitive time in his development, Damian internalises the message that finding his Aboriginal family will cause him to go 'off the rails'. The facilitator demonstrated a culturally unsafe approach; she denied and challenged Damian's identity as an Aboriginal person.



### Video: Cultural safety

These videos were produced by the Indigenous Engagement Unit at Monash University.

- The first video demonstrates a health services interaction that is not culturally safe: [aspirelr.link/yt-not-culturally-safe-interactions](https://aspirelr.link/yt-not-culturally-safe-interactions)
- This video demonstrates one that is culturally safe: [aspirelr.link/yt-culturally-safe-interactions](https://aspirelr.link/yt-culturally-safe-interactions)

Make a list of the different approaches you notice in both videos.



## Cultural concepts

Cultural safety is different to **cultural awareness** and **cultural competence**, although the concepts are related.

| Concept              | Description  |
|----------------------|--|
| Cultural awareness   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being aware of cultural difference and diversity and developing a sensitivity and respect for difference.</li> <li>• Cultural awareness is an aspect of cultural safety and is sometimes viewed as the first step towards achieving cultural safety.</li> </ul>   |
| Cultural safety      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating an environment that is safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</li> <li>• Cultural safety focuses on the perspective of the client/patient, rather than the perspective of the worker.</li> </ul>   |
| Cultural competence  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having awareness, respect and understanding of the cultural diversity around you.</li> <li>• Cultural competence means you can work effectively in cross-cultural situations and involves a consideration of the experiences of the client/patient, but focuses on the capacity of the worker.</li> </ul> |
| Cultural sensitivity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopting a non-biased attitude and tolerating other cultural values, opinions, customs and needs.</li> <li>• <b>Cultural sensitivity</b> involves being aware of the difference in others and showing respect for difference.</li> </ul>  |

#### Cultural awareness

Being aware of cultural difference and diversity and developing a sensitivity and respect for difference.

#### Cultural competence

Having awareness, respect and understanding of the cultural diversity around you.

#### Cultural sensitivity

Adopting a non-biased attitude and tolerating other cultural values, opinions, customs and needs.

Sources: <https://www.racp.edu.au/docs/default-source/advocacy-library/an-introduction-to-cultural-competency.pdf> [https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/Cultural%20Safety%20background%20paper%20January%202018\\_1.docx#:~:text=cultural%20awareness%2C%20defined%20as%20understanding,recipients%20of%20care%20or%20services](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/Cultural%20Safety%20background%20paper%20January%202018_1.docx#:~:text=cultural%20awareness%2C%20defined%20as%20understanding,recipients%20of%20care%20or%20services) <https://content.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-11/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-cult>

Read more about cultural safety in the workplace here: [aspirelr.link/what-is-cultural-safety](https://aspirelr.link/what-is-cultural-safety)

## Legislative context for cultural safety

The legislative context for cultural safety includes laws relating to discrimination, work health and safety, and privacy and confidentiality. States and territories also have laws relevant to cultural safety. For example, each state and territory of Australia has their own laws regarding discrimination.

| <p><b>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</b></p> | <p><b>The Racial Discrimination Act makes it illegal to discriminate against a person because of their race, ethnicity or colour in a range of settings, including when providing services to a person.</b></p>  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Work health and safety laws</b></p>          | <p>According to Australian law, organisations and workers have work health and safety responsibilities. Culturally safe workplaces help to create mentally healthy work environments for all workers.</p> <p>In a culturally safe workplace, people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respect and protect each other’s rights</li> <li>• examine their own cultural values and beliefs</li> <li>• are open-minded and flexible in their attitudes</li> <li>• understand that their own values and practices are not always the only or the best way to solve workplace problems.</li> </ul> <p>Each state and territory in Australia has its own work health and safety laws. You can read more about WHS laws and regulations here: <a href="https://aspirelr.link/swa-model-whs-laws">aspirelr.link/swa-model-whs-laws</a></p> |
| <p><b>Privacy and confidentiality</b></p>          | <p>In Australia, information collected about individuals is regulated by the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth).</p> <p>The Act outlines the legal requirements of agencies and organisations for handling personal information, including how that information is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collected</li> <li>• used</li> <li>• disclosed</li> <li>• stored.</li> </ul> <p>To be culturally safe, services need to respect the privacy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s personal and cultural affairs.</p> <p>You can read more about the Privacy Act here: <a href="https://aspirelr.link/oaic-the-privacy-act">aspirelr.link/oaic-the-privacy-act</a></p>  |



| <p><b>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</b></p>            | <p><b>The Racial Discrimination Act makes it illegal to discriminate against a person because of their race, ethnicity or colour in a range of settings, including when providing services to a person.</b></p>  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</b></p> | <p>Australia supports the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by the United Nations in 2007.</p> <p>Some of the articles included in the Declaration which are especially relevant to cultural safety include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• security and freedom from genocide, including the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples</li> <li>• freedom from assimilation and destruction of culture</li> <li>• culture and cultural property; that is, the right to practise and revitalise cultural traditions and customs.</li> </ul> <p>Although the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is not law in Australia, these standards influence law and policy reform.</p> <p>For more information about the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, visit: <a href="https://aspirelr.link/rights-of-indigenous-people">aspirelr.link/rights-of-indigenous-people</a></p> |

### Consult on key aspects of cultural safety

To establish key aspects of cultural safety in your organisation, you will need to consult with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people you consult with could be people who:

- use the service
- work at the organisation
- are connected to the service, such as other workers in other organisations
- are local leaders or spokespeople.

You could also approach local Indigenous-led services, such as Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), to help establish the key aspects of cultural safety in your organisation.

Because of the history of colonisation in Australia and its ongoing effects, there are various issues that need to be carefully considered when consulting with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and communities. You should consider the following:



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Is there an internal resource you can draw on?</b></p>   | <p>Is there someone, or some group, within your organisation whose role is to provide advice on issues relating to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families and communities; for example, a Reconciliation Action Group?</p> <p>If so, it may be best to approach them first to discuss who you could consult with and how to approach them.</p>  |
| <p><b>Is there an external resource you can draw on?</b></p>   | <p>Do you have an existing relationship with a local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation? If so, it may be best to approach them first to discuss who you could consult with and how to approach them.</p>   |
| <p><b>What are your expectations when approaching Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations for guidance or advice?</b></p>         | <p>For example, it is important to recognise that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations may not have time or capacity to advise you on cultural safety but may instead direct you towards other resources, organisations or relevant professional development opportunities.</p>  |
| <p><b>What are your expectations when approaching Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to consult them about cultural safety?</b></p> | <p>If you are planning to approach an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person to speak with them about cultural safety, recognise that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not every Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person wants, or feels qualified, to speak about issues relating to cultural safety</li> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not have a responsibility to educate non-Indigenous people about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures or communities</li> <li>• 'consultation fatigue' can be an issue for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. This occurs when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities are consulted about the same issues multiple times without any changes occurring as a result.</li> </ul> <p>Ask the person if they are able to speak with you and explain why you want to have the conversation. Respect the fact that they may be unable or unwilling to speak with you about cultural safety.</p> |
| <p><b>Do you need permission?</b></p>  | <p>If you are entering an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, you may need permission from the local relevant council or authority before you enter. It is considered respectful to send a letter of intent before you visit, explaining why you would like to visit.</p>   |

Sources: Partnership Kit: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Mission Australia) <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/documents/resource-sharing/1312-partnership-kit-supporting-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-partnerships> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols (Oxfam Australia) [https://www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015-74-ATSI-Cultural-Protocols-update\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.oxfam.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/2015-74-ATSI-Cultural-Protocols-update_WEB.pdf)



## Relevant organisations and peak bodies

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples led organisations and peak agencies offer advice and support on legal issues and health services and aim to improve the social, economic and cultural advancement of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The objective of many of these organisations is the promotion of legal, cultural, economic, political and social rights, as well as the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families.

Here are some Federal organisations and websites:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://aspirelr.link/naccho">aspirelr.link/naccho</a></li> </ul>           | <p>A national leadership body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in Australia. It represents 143 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) that operate in over 300 clinics across Australia and are initiated and operated by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.</p>  |
| <p><b>Coalition of Peaks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://aspirelr.link/coalition-of-peaks">aspirelr.link/coalition-of-peaks</a></li> </ul>                                      | <p>A representative body comprised of around 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak organisations that have partnered with Australian governments on Closing the Gap, a policy aimed at improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p>   |
| <p><b>Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://aspirelr.link/snaicc">aspirelr.link/snaicc</a></li> </ul>             | <p>SNAICC has a membership base of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-based child care agencies, multi-functional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS), crèches, long day care child care services, pre-schools, early childhood education services, early childhood support organisations, family support services, foster care agencies, family reunification services, family group homes, services for young people at risk, community groups and voluntary associations, government agencies and individual supporters.</p> |
| <p><b>First Peoples Disability Network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://aspirelr.link/fpdn">aspirelr.link/fpdn</a></li> </ul>  | <p>National organisation of and for Australia's First Peoples with disability, their families and communities. The organisation is governed by First Nations people with lived experience of disability.</p>   |
| <p><b>Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://aspirelr.link/asa">aspirelr.link/asa</a></li> </ul>       | <p>Australia's only national institution focusing exclusively on the diverse history, cultures and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia.</p>  |
| <p><b>Australian Museum – First Nations resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://aspirelr.link/aus-museum-first-nations">aspirelr.link/aus-museum-first-nations</a></li> </ul> | <p>Australia's first museum, based in Sydney, is a hub of information, resources and research.</p> <p>The Australian Museum First Nations portal includes a range of resources about the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia.</p>  |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>National Indigenous Television (NITV)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://aspirelr.link/nitv">aspirelr.link/nitv</a></li> </ul> | <p>National Indigenous Television (NITV) is a channel made by, for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p> <p>On Demand programs, including programs that provide information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, are available through the NITV website.</p> |
| <p><b>Share Our Pride</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://aspirelr.link/share-our-pride">aspirelr.link/share-our-pride</a></li> </ul> | <p>Share Our Pride is an educational resource developed by Reconciliation Australia.</p> <p>It provides information about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures and history in a chapter format.</p>  |

## Contact local community organisations

Each state and territory has a network of Aboriginal corporations and land and sea councils, such as the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council. They are a good first point of contact for non-Indigenous people seeking assistance and information about local culture.

The roles of these organisations include:

- providing a strong voice for the Aboriginal people they represent
- helping Aboriginal people get back their country by land claim or purchase
- helping Aboriginal people manage their land
- protecting Aboriginal peoples’ cultures and sacred sites
- fighting for legal recognition of Aboriginal people’s rights
- helping to resolve land disputes, native title claims and compensation cases
- pursuing cultural, social and economic independence for Aboriginal people
- maintaining and enhancing Aboriginal culture, identity and heritage.

Some local government councils also provide information on the traditional custodians of your area. Here are some examples of state and territory organisations:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <p><b>WA</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia – <a href="https://aspirelr.link/ahcwa">aspirelr.link/ahcwa</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peak body for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) in Western Australia.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Tas.</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre – <a href="https://aspirelr.link/tacinc">aspirelr.link/tacinc</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Represents the political and community development aspirations of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>        |



|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <p><b>NT</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Land Council – <a href="http://aspirelr.link/clc">aspirelr.link/clc</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Represents and provides services to Aboriginal traditional owners and residents of Central Australia.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Northern Land Council – <a href="http://aspirelr.link/nlc-about-us">aspirelr.link/nlc-about-us</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assisting Aboriginal peoples in the Top End of the Northern Territory to acquire and manage their traditional lands and seas.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>ACT</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body – <a href="http://aspirelr.link/atsieb">aspirelr.link/atsieb</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advocating for accountability, transparency and effectiveness in achieving social and economic outcomes for the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Qld</b></p>  | <p>Queensland Coalition of Peaks being established including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (Qld) Ltd – <a href="http://aspirelr.link/atsils">aspirelr.link/atsils</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community-based organisation established to provide professional and culturally competent legal services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Queensland.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak Ltd – <a href="http://aspirelr.link/qatsicpp">aspirelr.link/qatsicpp</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion and advocacy of the rights, safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>SA</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement – <a href="http://aspirelr.link/alm">aspirelr.link/alm</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of legal, cultural, economic, political and social rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as dispossessed peoples within South Australia.</li> <li>- Acts as a lobby group and, where able, implements support programs that assist in addressing some of the issues known to contribute to Aboriginal people encountering the criminal justice system.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Vic.</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency – <a href="http://aspirelr.link/vacca">aspirelr.link/vacca</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State-wide Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) servicing children, young people, families, and community members.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations – <a href="http://aspirelr.link/fvtoc">aspirelr.link/fvtoc</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations was created in 2013, focusing on the shared interests of traditional owners: broadening political engagement, increasing economic opportunities and caring for Country.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd – <a href="http://aspirelr.link/vacsal">aspirelr.link/vacsal</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State-wide agency that provides advice to Government on a range of community development issues, as well as being a major provider of services to the Aboriginal community in both the metropolitan and some regional areas.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |



|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>NSW</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Aboriginal Land Council – <a href="http://aspirelr.link/alc">aspirelr.link/alc</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peak representative body in Aboriginal Affairs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• NSW Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat – <a href="http://aspirelr.link/absec">aspirelr.link/absec</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aboriginal child and family peak organisation, working to empower Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities impacted by the child protection system, as well as support a quality Aboriginal community-controlled child and family sector to deliver needed supports in Aboriginal communities across the state.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|------------|---|

## People who can help

Ensure you only approach those with the authority to speak about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures.

Here is a list of people you can approach for information.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Elders and/or other community leaders</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Aboriginal cultures, Elders are accorded special respect as the teachers and holders of the knowledge of their communities. They provide unique insight into the traditional ways and activities of their communities.</li> <li>• The traditional roles of Elders differ across Australia, but in general they are committed to sharing what they know and providing guidance to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to help maintain connections to land and culture. They are often addressed as Auntie or Uncle, terms that indicate respect.</li> <li>• Elders are often very busy as they have many demands on their time. Offering money to compensate for cost and time involved, including travel time, acknowledges the important work that Elders do in the community.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Aboriginal Liaison Officers</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal Liaison Officers are often employed in public sector services including health, education, housing, local government and justice. They provide emotional and practical support to Aboriginal families who access services, and help relevant organisations communicate with each other on the needs, priorities and concerns of the Aboriginal community. Their role does not include educating non-Indigenous Australians. However, they may be able to assist you in identifying who to contact.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Aboriginal interpreters</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In parts of Australia where Indigenous languages are first languages, interpreters assist in communication. They may be able to advise you on how to contact relevant local people who can assist you.</li> </ul>  |

Be aware that not everyone has the authority to speak about specific Indigenous cultural material. It is not appropriate to expect any Indigenous Australian to answer questions or resolve issues, or be an expert on all aspects of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures.



For example, in her book, *Am I Black Enough for You?*, writer Anita Heiss wrote, ‘I have been expected by non-Aboriginal people – at university, during school visits, at writers’ festivals, at dinner parties, on plane rides and in night clubs – to be all knowing of Aboriginal culture as well as to articulate my predefined, exotic and somehow tangible relationship with the land.’

## Effective consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Although there are no set rules for consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, here are some approaches which are likely to help facilitate effective consultations.

Be prepared to share information about yourself.

Be patient; it may take time to build up trust and rapport.

Keep the first meeting casual. Do not rush into a conversation about cultural safety but allow time for each person or group to get to know each other.

Show respect through your verbal and non-verbal communication, such as body language.

Use language that respects the beliefs and traditions of the person you are consulting with; for example, ask them how they refer to themselves.

Be aware of and avoid terminology that may be offensive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, such as using:

- shorthand terms for identities such as, Aborigines or Islanders
- terms when referring to the beliefs of First Nations Australians such as, myth, legend and folklore
- possessive terms such as, our Aboriginal peoples.

In some circumstances, direct questions will not be appropriate. You may need to make a comment to find out about people’s views, rather than ask a direct question.

Acknowledge and value differing opinions. Remember individuals and families may have different opinions, even if they come from the same community.

Avoid assumptions. Remember that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been negatively affected by the assumptions of non-Indigenous people.

Be aware of and follow protocols around speaking the names of people who have passed away, or sharing their photograph.

Respect silence. An Aboriginal person might be silent because they want to listen to others’ opinions before they offer their own. Trying to fill the gaps left by silence may make it appear as if you are trying to dominate the conversation.

Respect people’s privacy.



Thank people for taking the time to provide you with advice or guidance and for sharing their knowledge.

Be authentic; be yourself.

Sources: <https://australianstogether.org.au/resources-2/languageandterminologyguide/> Mission Australia guide <https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/accessible-and-inclusive-content/inclusive-language/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples> <https://www.tsirc.qld.gov.au/our-communities/torres-strait-history> [www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2016/12/21/what-continuous-culture-and-are-aboriginal-cultures-oldest](http://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2016/12/21/what-continuous-culture-and-are-aboriginal-cultures-oldest) <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islanders-australias-first-peoples>

There are several protocols related to knowing and sharing information. Here are some examples:

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Men’s and women’s business</b> | In traditional culture, men and women have separate responsibilities in the community. Ceremonies and rituals are performed by specific roles and are often private or secret. Some knowledge is only for men or only for women.  |
| <b>Deceased people</b>            | Some Aboriginal people do not use the name of a deceased person. An initial or replacement may be used to refer to the person.<br><br>When referring to a person who is deceased, it is most appropriate to follow the guidance of the group or nation that person came from. It is also the custom for some people to refrain from viewing images of a deceased person. If you are showing an image of someone who is deceased, it is respectful to give a warning first to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person. |
| <b>Photography</b>                | You may wish to take photos of special occasions or to record a milestone. Ensure you seek permission before filming or photographing a demonstration or performance by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.   |

## Research on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures

A culture and its values and practices may be represented inaccurately online or even in a published book. It is always preferable to find sources that are written or produced by Indigenous Australians.

Some examples of reliable sources are:

- official government resources, such as education and health websites
- resources produced by non-government organisations (NGOs)
- recently published textbooks that make an effort to show Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives (generally less than 30 years old)
- study materials
- research from experts.



Here are some things to consider when researching information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures.

| Example   | What to do   |
|---|--|
| <p>Some aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures have been used or reproduced wrongly or without permission. For example, objects have been created for sale, such as mass-produced machine-made boomerangs or didgeridoos targeted towards the tourism market.</p>                   | <p>It is always preferable to support Aboriginal businesses when sourcing materials related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures.</p>  |
| <p>Some aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures or ways of life have been exaggerated or have only a limited view of traditional culture. For example, Indigenous Australians have often been thought of as <i>primitive</i>, or living a <i>timeless, unchanging lifestyle</i>.</p> | <p>Avoid the stereotypical ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' culture have been portrayed. Source books that represent Indigenous Australians living and engaging with modern culture or technology.</p>   |
| <p>Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures have been portrayed as childlike since the protection system that imposed many rules and restrictions on adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p>   | <p>Avoid resources that present Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures in a simplistic way. Some resources use dialogue in a fluent Aboriginal language, but it is translated by the author into a simplified or pidgin version of English.</p> <p>Avoid using words such as nomads and hunter-gatherers.</p> <p>Emphasise the positive aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures; for example, they were the first ocean-going navigators, first astronomers and first agriculturalists in Australia.</p> |

## Example

### Establish key aspects of cultural safety in consultation

Nishra works as a community development officer at GoodWays, an organisation in a disadvantaged regional location that provides community supports including a food bank, a toy library, low-cost counselling and parenting groups.

GoodWays data indicates that the service is not being used by Aboriginal people, even though there are many Aboriginal people living in the town.



The organisation asks Nishra to investigate how the organisation could be more culturally safe by consulting with local Aboriginal people.

Nishra approaches Dustin, a non-Indigenous colleague who she used to work with but who now works at an Aboriginal-led organisation. Dustin connects Nishra with the organisation’s family liaison officer, Petra, as she has relationships with many Aboriginal families in the local area.

Nishra and Petra meet up and discuss the data they have on low participation rates of Aboriginal families and the changes they would like to make to increase their participation.

Petra tells Nishra she is not surprised that Aboriginal people are not using GoodWays’ services, and tells her what Aboriginal people have said about their negative experiences with GoodWays. Nishra asks Petra for suggestions about what needs to change. Petra says she cannot speak for the entire community but it might be better if she speaks with a few other people first, or brings them along to meet Nishra.

## Practice Task 2

### Question 1

Match the concept to the definition.

|                     |
|---------------------|
| Cultural safety     |
| Cultural competence |
| Cultural awareness  |

|  |
|--|
| A sensitivity to cultural differences and cultural diversity.                                |
| Focuses on the perspective of the client/patient, rather than the perspective of the worker. |
| Behaviours and attitudes that allow people to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. |



**Question 2**

Suggest five things a worker should consider before consulting with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

**Question 3**

Provide at least three examples of terms or phrases that workers should avoid using when consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



**Question 4**

Provide two examples of laws that relate to cultural safety.

**Question 5**

Provide an example of a resource for researching Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture and history.

# 1C

## Evaluate the extent to which cultural safety is integrated in own work and workplace

**When you evaluate something, you make a judgement about an amount, number or value.**

Some evaluations are comprehensive; for example, an organisation might evaluate a two-year initiative using multiple sources of data and methods of data collection. Evaluations can also be much smaller in scope; for example, you might evaluate your own progress in working towards a specific goal.

The table below lists the five key components involved in an evaluation, a description of the component and a simple everyday example which illustrates what each component might mean.

| Component of evaluation | Description of component                                    | Everyday example  |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Evaluation questions    | You need to have a specific question or questions to answer | Have I lost weight?   |
| Evaluation criteria     | You need criteria which indicates what success looks like   | If I am successful, I will have reduced my overall body weight by 10% |
| Data                    | You need data to measure the evaluation criteria            | My weight in kgs  |
| Data collection         | You need to establish how you will collect the data         | Weighing scale  |
| Data analysis           | You need to analyse the data that you collect               | Comparison of weight (in kgs) on a weekly basis                       |

### Data collection and analysis

Data are items of information. The information might be numbers, words or observations.

Here are some examples of data, data collection methods and data analysis that you could use to evaluate the extent to which cultural safety is integrated into your work practices and your workplace.



In some cases, you will need to collect data yourself. For example, you will need to speak with your colleagues to gather their feedback on your practice. In other cases the data may already be available. For example, your organisation might have data from a staff survey that you could use to evaluate the extent to which cultural safety is integrated into your workplace.

|                                | <b>My own work practices</b>   | <b>My workplace</b>  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Data</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from my clients</li> <li>• Feedback from my colleagues</li> <li>• Feedback from my manager</li> <li>• Feedback from other professionals from other organisations I work with on a regular basis</li> <li>• Information about professional development activities</li> <li>• Notes from my own self-reflection exercises</li> <li>• Results of self-assessment tools</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client feedback</li> <li>• Worker feedback</li> <li>• Management feedback</li> <li>• Feedback from other organisations</li> <li>• Data about professional development opportunities and participation</li> <li>• Organisational vision and mission statements</li> <li>• Information about workers</li> </ul> |
| <b>Data collection methods</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions, consultations or interviews with clients, colleagues, managers and/or other professionals</li> <li>• Document retrieval; for example, information about professional development activities undertaken</li> <li>• Self-reflection and self-assessment tools</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Document retrieval; for example, organisational policies, human resources data</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Data analysis</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common themes</li> <li>• Frequency</li> <li>• Analysis of content</li> </ul>  |  |



## Example

### Evaluate the extent to which cultural safety is integrated in own work and workplace

Julian is a support worker at Pathways, an organisation that provides day services to adults with disabilities. To evaluate the extent to which cultural safety is integrated into his workplace, Julian needs to collect data.

The methods Julian is using are interviews and focus groups. The interviews will be with Pathways staff to explore their views on the extent to which the Pathways workplace is culturally safe. The focus groups will involve current and former Pathways clients and their carers and will also explore views on cultural safety at Pathways.

## Self-reflection

**Self-reflection** is one of the methods you can use to evaluate your own work practices. It involves stepping back from a particular situation to:

- make sense of the situation
- understand what the situation means
- learn from the situation and
- apply what you have learned to future situations.

Reflection helps you to examine your attitudes, knowledge and skills, and the experiences that have formed these beliefs. You must continually reflect on your practices to challenge your own perspectives and biases.

As well as using reflection to examine your own perspectives you can also examine those of others. In terms of perspectives towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and histories, you may want to look at:

- your knowledge, or lack of knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' histories and cultures
- the knowledge of your peers who work in your team
- the way service is delivered or acknowledges the culture of the local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- whether programs represent minority cultures as well as dominant cultures
- your role in making connections and developing cultural competence
- the way your organisation supports self-determination and equality for Indigenous Australians
- the extent to which traditional custodians or local Aboriginal Elders are consulted.

### Self-reflection

The ability to observe and evaluate one's own thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

## Self-reflection process

Self-reflection helps you to understand your work practice and what you could do differently. The process involves six steps.

| The self-reflection process |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1.                          | Select a workplace experience, situation or event to reflect on.                         |
| 2.                          | Describe and unpack the experience.  |
| 3.                          | Analyse your experience by examining the emotions and behaviours you associated with it. |
| 4.                          | Interpret your response or reaction to the experience.                                   |
| 5.                          | Explore the alternatives and think about how you will respond in the future.             |
| 6.                          | Act with new intent and information.   |

There are a range of self-reflection and self-assessment techniques and tools you can use to evaluate your own work practice.

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Questioning</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourages us to develop new knowledge about ourselves and others</li> <li>The questions we ask during self-reflection should address how other people feel and why they feel that way</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Seeking other perspectives</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading widely, talking with people, and trying to <i>step into the shoes</i> of clients to experience what a situation might be like for them</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Recording observations</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping a journal or diary to record your observations of issues relating to cultural safety</li> <li>Your observations could prompt questions relating to your own values and beliefs and how these impact on your work</li> <li>Your observations can then be used as the basis for self-reflection or discussions with others, while ensuring you maintain client privacy and confidentiality</li> </ul> |

Source: <https://www.telethonkids.org.au/globalassets/media/documents/aboriginal-health/working-together-second-edition/wt-part-3-chapt-12-final.pdf>

In addition to generic reflection and self-assessment tools, there are a range of tools that are specifically designed to encourage reflection and assessment of cultural safety.

Here are some examples of cultural safety self-reflection and self-assessment tools:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Self-Assessment Toolkit (ACT Council of Social Services): [aspirelr.link/actcoss](https://aspirelr.link/actcoss)
- Cultural safety continuum reflective tool (Victoria State Government, Health and Human Services): [aspirelr.link/cultural-safety-continuum-reflective-tool](https://aspirelr.link/cultural-safety-continuum-reflective-tool)



## Practice Task 3

### Question 1

Identify three types of data you could collect to evaluate the extent to which cultural safety is integrated in your workplace.

### Question 2

Identify two data collection methods you can use when evaluating the extent to which cultural safety is integrated in your own work.

### Question 3

Provide three ways self-reflection can help you evaluate your own work practices.



## Summary

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been living in Australia for at least 65,000 years.
- There are two distinct Indigenous cultural groups in Australia: Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- It is through their lines of descent, as well as their clans and language groups, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have connections to Country.
- The concept of terra nullius (land belonging to no one) was used by the European settlers to justify their occupation of lands that did not belong to them.
- Dominant Western views within institutions can alienate people who have different values and beliefs.
- Intergenerational trauma is passed on through generations via parenting practices, violence, substance misuse and mental health difficulties.
- A culturally safe environment is one where individuals, organisations and systems are aware of the impact of their own culture and values on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and are committed to creating and maintaining an environment where all people are treated in a culturally respectful manner.
- Data is essential to any evaluation; data are items of information. The information might be numbers, words or observations.
- Self-reflection helps you understand your work practice and what you could do differently.



# Learning Checkpoint 1

## Identify cultural safety issues in the workplace

### Part A

1. Identify two examples that illustrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

2. Briefly outline why local resources should be used when researching the culture and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

3. Provide two examples of how the effects of European settlement have impacted upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' engagement with community services and health systems in the present day.



**4.** Provide two examples of how the loss of land and culture resulting from European settlement affected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**5.** Match each term to its definition.

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Assimilation            | Where a condition, requirement or practice appears to treat people equally but instead disadvantages some people because of a factor such as their age, gender, ethnicity or disability. |
| Discrimination          | A tendency, feeling or opinion that is based on an ill-informed or unreasonable belief.  |
| Racism                  | The act of excluding or treating a person differently based solely on an attribute such as disability, age, gender, race or sexual orientation.  |
| Indirect discrimination | Prejudice, discrimination or hatred towards someone because they are part of a racial or ethnic group, typically one that is marginalised.   |
| Bias                    | An ideology that to enjoy the same standard of living as non-Indigenous people, Indigenous people need to adopt European traditions and beliefs.   |

**6.** Provide at least two examples of how cultural factors might impact service delivery to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients. Consider your own culture and Western systems and structures used in the delivery of services.



**7.** Briefly outline how the impact of trauma on a person’s communication and decision-making skills can contribute to their ill health.

**8.** Describe an Australian Act or law that is relevant to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**9.** Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| a. Consultation fatigue occurs when an organisation is overwhelmed by their consultation responsibilities. | Yes / No |
| b. Referring to the beliefs of Aboriginal peoples as folklore is offensive to some Aboriginal peoples.     | Yes / No |
| c. The best approach to take in a consultation is to ask direct questions about what you want to know.     | Yes / No |
| d. For the purposes of evaluation, both numbers and words can be treated as data.                          | Yes / No |



**10.** Identify two ways a worker can evaluate the extent to which cultural safety is integrated into their own work practices.

**11.** Identify which of the following statements describe concepts related to cultural safety. Tick all that apply.

- Cultural safety focuses on the capacity of the worker, rather than the perspective of the client.
- Cultural competence involves considering the experiences of the client.
- Cultural competence focuses upon the capacity of the worker.
- Cultural awareness involves developing sensitivity to cultural differences.
- Cultural competence is often viewed as the first step towards achieving cultural safety.

## Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

### Case study

Mikhail works as a disability officer for an organisation that provides in-home support to adults with disabilities. One of Mikhail's clients is Joe, a 59-year-old Aboriginal man who is a member of the Stolen Generation. He and his twin sisters were taken from their parents when they were aged six and four.

After spending some time at a care home, Joe was sent to live with a family in the city and was separated from his twin sisters, who were sent to a different family in a country town. Joe never saw his father again but was able to contact his mother when he was in his early 20s. Joe's mother had never recovered from the trauma of losing her children and found it difficult to connect with Joe.



Joe's case notes state that when he was in his 30s he was in a car accident and became a paraplegic. When Joe was in rehabilitation, he was treated poorly by staff including them making racist comments and assumptions about him as an Aboriginal person.

Joe is close to his biological mother's brother, a prominent Elder in the local community, who visits Joe on a regular basis. Joe only speaks English. His file states that he dislikes the term Indigenous Australian and prefers to be referred to as Aboriginal or a Yuin man.

1. Identify two issues that might influence the communication and relationship between Mikhail and Joe.

2. Describe how past and present power relations between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people might impact upon Joe's engagement with Mikhail.



3. Explain how Joe's prior experiences of racism and discrimination might impact his willingness to engage with Mikhail.

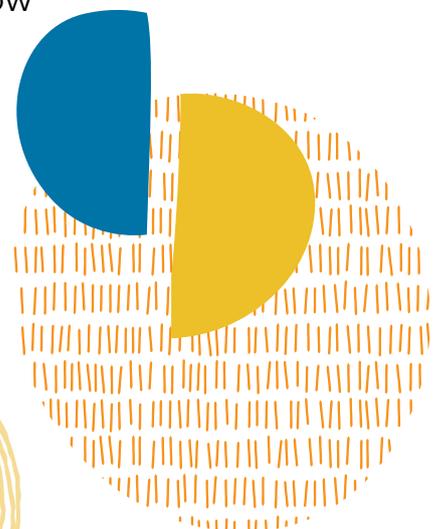
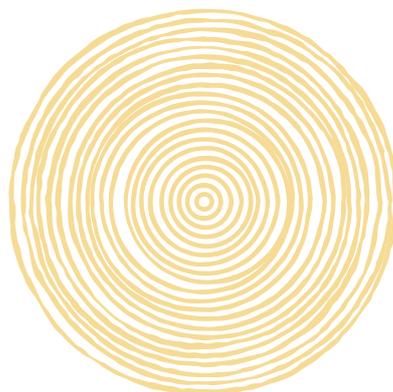
4. Mikhail will sometimes need to talk to Joe about issues relating to his physical health.

How might the trauma that Joe has experienced impact his ability to understand and retain the information that Mikhail provides to him?



## Topic 2: Model cultural safety in own work

- 2A Ensure work practices are grounded in awareness of one's own cultural bias
- 2B Reflect awareness of own and other cultures and show respect for cultural differences among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- 2C Engage with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interpreters and colleagues as cultural brokers



# 2A

## Ensure work practices are grounded in awareness of one's own cultural bias

**Our work practices are informed by our cultural values and beliefs.**

Although we may think that we have a neutral approach to the work we undertake, it is impossible for our work practices not to be informed by our values and beliefs. These values and beliefs are based on what we learn throughout our lives from our parents, friends, teachers and from institutions such as schools and the media. These values and beliefs are the basis of our culture and they inform our behaviour.

Some of our cultural values and beliefs are so deeply embedded within us that we are not even aware that we have them. Cultural biases can emerge when we are unaware of the cultural values and beliefs that inform our thoughts and behaviours.

### Cultural bias

**Our cultural biases are formed throughout our lives. Like our values and beliefs, they come from what we learn from our parents and the people and institutions around us.**

Cultural bias is the interpreting or judging of situations and actions based on the standards of one's own culture.

For example, in some cultures it is considered rude not to look someone in the eye when you are talking to them. In other cultures, direct eye contact is considered disrespectful. If you are having a conversation with someone and they are not looking you in the eye, you might think to yourself, 'This person is rude'. This is an example of cultural bias; you are interpreting and judging a person's behaviour based on the standards of your own culture.

Biased thoughts are a natural part of human psychology; our brains take shortcuts to make sense of things we do not understand.

For example, we try to make sense of why a person is avoiding eye contact by drawing upon what we have learned, which is why we form the opinion that the person avoiding eye contact with us is rude.

An awareness of one's own cultural bias would interrupt this thought process. Instead of instantly deciding that the person is rude we would remind ourselves that our beliefs about eye contact are based upon our own cultural standards and these standards may be different for people from other cultural backgrounds.

The risk of biased thoughts is that they can lead to **prejudice** and **stereotyping**.

#### Prejudice

An unjustified or incorrect attitude towards an individual based solely on the individual's membership of a social group.

#### Stereotyping

Judging an individual based on particular characteristics, then applying that belief to all members of that group.

## Awareness of bias

Becoming aware of one's own biases can be difficult. We may not even be aware of some of our subconscious assumptions and beliefs. The following riddle is often used to highlight subconscious bias:

*A father rushes his son to hospital after his son is hit by a car. When they arrive at the hospital, the father reluctantly releases his son's hand as he is rushed into surgery. In the operating room, the surgeon takes one look at the boy and says, "Oh no. It's my son". How is this possible?*

Most people momentarily struggle to answer this riddle. Of course, the answer is that the surgeon is the boy's *mother*. But the fact that most people are briefly stumped by this riddle speaks to a subconscious bias about gender; we assume that surgeons are male.

As this example indicates, our biases can apply to a range of characteristics. In addition to having biases about gender and culture, we can have biases relating to:

- race
- age
- sexual orientation
- disability
- weight
- religion.

People see, interpret and evaluate things in different ways. Misunderstandings can easily arise if you try to use your world view to make sense of somebody else's reality.

Although it can be difficult to identify and gain awareness of personal biases, it can be done. More importantly, being aware of cultural biases is essential to ensure your own practice is culturally safe.

Project Implicit is a non-profit organisation involving a group of international researchers who are interested in unconscious bias. The Implicit Association Tests on their website measure people's attitudes and beliefs towards a range of issues including gender, race and sexual orientation. Implicit Association Tests can reveal biases you have that you were previously unaware of. You can read more here: [aspirelr.link/about-implicit-harvard](https://aspirelr.link/about-implicit-harvard)



## Awareness of bias in work practices

It is not enough for workers to simply be aware of their cultural biases; awareness should also inform and change work practices. Here are some steps workers can take to ensure they are fully aware of any personal cultural biases:

### Cultural lens

The unique perspective a person forms about the world based on their experiences.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Acknowledge one's own culture</b></p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that regardless of your ancestry, ethnicity or skin colour, everyone has a <b>cultural lens</b> through which they view the world.</li> <li>• You can better understand your own cultural lens by considering how you think and feel about issues such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- direct versus indirect communication</li> <li>- individual responsibilities; for example, who is responsible for looking after family members?</li> <li>- social responsibilities; for example, in what circumstances should a person with many resources share what they have with a person who has fewer resources?</li> <li>- social etiquette</li> <li>- work ethic</li> <li>- concepts of beauty</li> <li>- notions of modesty</li> <li>- self-concept; for example, defining yourself by your profession or by the family or group you belong to.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Understand how your own culture might impact on how you work with clients, colleagues and other people whose cultural background differs from your own.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Consider alternative perspectives</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect upon perspectives that are different to your own and think about how your own perspectives shape how you communicate and interact with others.</li> <li>• For example, individualism is valued in Western and European cultures. Individuals make decisions about their careers based upon their own preferences and goals; children are encouraged to leave home when they finish studying and live independently and competition is encouraged.</li> <li>• This contrasts with other cultures that value collectivism. In collectivist cultures decisions are made together or by people in positions of authority; career choices are based on what an individual's family wants from them and the ability to cooperate, rather than compete, is highly encouraged.</li> </ul>   |



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Notice your own thoughts when working with others</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our brains take shortcuts to make sense of things we do not understand. You can interrupt this process by noticing your own thoughts when you are working with someone whose beliefs or values differ from your own.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Identify when cultural differences cause you to feel uncomfortable or frustrated and manage these appropriately</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use self-reflection tools to reflect on situations where you have felt uncomfortable or frustrated about behaviour which has conflicted with your own cultural beliefs or values.</li> <li>• Identify how you can manage these situations effectively in the future and apply these lessons to your practice.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Recognise the power that your role gives you</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be sensitive to imbalances of power, such as the imbalance of power in a worker-client relationship.</li> <li>• Work to reduce imbalances of power; for example, respect clients' rights to make decisions about their own lives.</li> </ul>   |

Source: [https://www.state.gov/courses/answeringdifficultquestions/html/app.htm?p=module2\\_p2.htm](https://www.state.gov/courses/answeringdifficultquestions/html/app.htm?p=module2_p2.htm)

## Example

### Ensure work practices are grounded in awareness of one's own cultural bias

Joss grew up in Adelaide; her parents were born in Australia and can trace their ancestry back to the United Kingdom.

Joss's parents value education. They wanted Joss to finish high school and make her own decisions about what she wanted to do for a career. When Joss was in her last year of high school, her grandfather developed dementia, and when she offered to help her grandmother care for her grandfather at home, Joss's parents encouraged her to focus on her study instead. "Your grandfather would be so proud of you for everything you have achieved," they told her. "He would not want you to spend your time looking after him."

After high school, Joss got a job as a support worker providing support to families with young children with disabilities. The very first family she worked with, the Andersons, identified as Maori.

Her first impression when Joss visits the Andersons' home is that it is chaotic. The Andersons are looking after their children as well as two children of a cousin. Two of the children's grandparents live in the house as well, and one uses a wheelchair.



Joss thinks about her own cultural lens and how this family is very different to her own. She considers the strengths of the Anderson household. There are a lot of people to help look after Arohina, the youngest child who has autism; the grandparents have a sense of belonging and purpose and are unlikely to feel lonely in such a busy and dynamic environment. When they sit down together to talk about Arohina's support needs, the Andersons find Joss to be open, welcoming and warm.

## Practice Task 4

### Question 1

Briefly describe cultural bias and how it is formed.

### Question 2

Identify three ways to ensure you are aware of your own cultural bias and the way it can influence your attitudes and behaviours at work.

# 2B

## Reflect awareness of own and other cultures and show respect for cultural differences among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

**Cultural awareness is the first step towards achieving cultural safety.**

When a worker is culturally aware, they understand individual differences between themselves and people of other backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures and nationalities. They demonstrate this understanding through the way they think, behave and communicate.

A culturally aware worker also demonstrates an openness and respect for a range of different types of diversity, such as diverse cultures, languages, religions and communication styles.

### Develop cultural awareness

A culturally aware approach to working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples involves having some knowledge of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and history.

However, you also need to accept and be aware that there are things you do not know and demonstrate an openness to learning more.

Remember the importance of knowing about the diversity of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. Learning about and acknowledging the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples whose traditional lands you are working on would demonstrate cultural awareness.

To be culturally aware, you also need to demonstrate an awareness of your own culture. For example, if you encounter a cultural practice that is very different to your own, you need to be able to reflect on the reasons for the difference rather than simply reacting to it.

Reflecting on difference might involve, for example, reflecting on how you are feeling in the moment and why you are feeling that way. Remember the earlier example of feeling uncomfortable because someone is not making eye contact and the cultural bias behind this reaction. Reacting to difference might involve jumping to conclusions about the person or their community; such as, this person is rude.

Cultural awareness and cultural safety involve continuous learning. You can never know everything about the culture of every person you interact with at work. Be open to learning more by talking to and learning from others. Remember that cultural safety involves shared knowledge and experience and shared learning, and take up opportunities to undertake professional development.

Steps you can take to become more culturally aware:

- Find out more about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures whose traditional lands you are working on.
- Demonstrate an awareness of your own culture by reflecting on your values and behaviours that are driven by your culture.
- Demonstrate a commitment to continuous learning and look for opportunities for professional development that can increase your sensitivity and understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.

## Example

### Show respect for cultural differences among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Izzy is a social educator at a service that provides day services to older adults. Izzy is building his knowledge of the Traditional Owners of the lands he works on, the Wurundjeri People. In the past few months he has learned about some important Wurundjeri ancestors, key events in the history of the Wurundjeri People and significant places in the local area.

Since undertaking cultural awareness training with a local Indigenous-led organisation, Izzy has developed connections with a few local Wurundjeri people who he continues to learn from.

## Culturally aware communication

**The way you communicate at work reflects your awareness of culture; both other people's and your own.**

### Active listening

Concentrated listening and non-verbal encouragement indicating an understanding of what is being said.

Techniques that can be used to demonstrate cultural awareness in communication with clients and colleagues of all cultural backgrounds include using **active listening** to pick up on messages and cues people may be subtly communicating. This involves making a conscious effort to hear what another person is saying. It involves paying attention, showing you are listening, providing feedback, responding appropriately and deferring judgement. When someone is actively listening, they are not distracted by what is going on around them.



Here are some other strategies:

- Ensure your body language is appropriate according to the individual's cultural preferences.
- Allow time for interactions.
- Use empathy to try to understand the experience of the person you are interacting with.
- Work towards establishing a rapport and developing a trusting relationship.
- Check if you are unsure about what is acceptable.
- Do not make assumptions based on stereotypes.
- Treat each person as an individual with individual needs, regardless of their culture.
- Accommodate language differences by obtaining an interpreter.
- Be aware of biases you may have.
- Make a conscious effort to learn more about a particular individual or group.
- Request peer feedback about your communication techniques.

## Terms of respect

Respectful terminology must be used when referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures. Guides on the correct use of appropriate language and terminology are produced by departments of health and education authorities, including universities. Some terms are offensive and have been used in the past as an expression of power by the dominant culture. Usually it is not appropriate for non-Indigenous people to use these words.

One example of a guide on appropriate Aboriginal terminology is produced by the Centre for Aboriginal Health, NSW Ministry of Health. You can access it here: [aspirelr.link/cah-terminology](https://aspirelr.link/cah-terminology)

Some terminology guides suitable for schools and early learning services in Australia can be found at:

- [aspirelr.link/indigenous-terminology-guide](https://aspirelr.link/indigenous-terminology-guide)
- [aspirelr.link/appropriate-terminology-aboriginal-topics](https://aspirelr.link/appropriate-terminology-aboriginal-topics)
- [aspirelr.link/indigenous-terminology](https://aspirelr.link/indigenous-terminology)

**Note:** Recommendations on appropriate terminology vary across organisations from different states and territories. Ensure you refer to a reputable site that applies to the state/territory where your service is based.

## Work practices that respect cultural differences

In your communication techniques and work practices, you need to show respect for the cultural differences among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Here are some ways you can do this:

- Learn and use the name of the peoples and groups you are working with.
- Learn about the customs and traditions of the peoples and groups you are working with.
- Demonstrate respect for different customs and traditions of peoples and groups. For example, in some communities it is disrespectful to discuss female issues, *women's business*, in the presence of men, and vice versa.
- Be aware of and demonstrate respect for different kinship systems. For example, in some Aboriginal communities, a brother-in-law may not be able to speak directly with a sister-in-law.
- Learn and use the traditional names of places within the areas where you work.
- Learn about local Elders and find out what name you should use to address them.
- Develop an understanding of the experiences, issues, needs and aspirations of the First Nations peoples and communities you work with.
- Avoid generalisations about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

AIATSIS provides information about how to determine the Traditional Owners of the Country you are on: [aspirelr.link/aiatsis-traditional-owners](https://aspirelr.link/aiatsis-traditional-owners)

## Acknowledgment of Country

*Acknowledgment* means showing awareness and understanding of something. In this case, it shows awareness that we are living on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander land.

Any person can make an acknowledgement. The statement should include the name of the traditional custodians of the area where the service is based, and should be known and understood by the community. This is different to a Welcome to Country, which should only be performed by an Aboriginal person.

Often, an Acknowledgment of Country is given at the beginning of a meeting or significant event. There are many resources online to support your service in developing an Acknowledgment of Country. A basic form is saying, "We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging".



## Practice Task 5

### Question 1

Suggest two ways for a worker to reflect on their own and other cultures in work practices.

### Question 2

Which of the following are active listening techniques? Tick all that apply.

- Use body language, such as facing the person to show you are listening.
- Multi-task so you do not lose any work time.
- Remain very still and do not move until it is your turn to speak.
- Provide feedback to acknowledge what you have heard.
- Defer judgement or comment until the person has finished speaking.

### Question 3

List two ways workers can show respect for the cultural differences among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

# 2C

## Engage with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interpreters and colleagues as cultural brokers

**Cultural brokers bridge the gap between people from different cultures.**

A cultural broker is a person who mediates between people of different cultural backgrounds for a particular purpose, such as resolving a conflict or bringing about a change.

A cultural broker understands the different cultural values, beliefs and practices of people involved in an interaction. They can act as a go-between, and communicate the different interests and priorities of the two groups.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural brokers are especially important in the healthcare system. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers often work as cultural brokers.

Other people who can function as cultural brokers include the following:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreters     | Interpreters help break down language barriers faced by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples when dealing with health, social welfare and legal systems.   |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officers | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officers provide cultural, emotional and social support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in health and community service settings.<br><br>For example, Aboriginal hospital liaison officers advocate and liaise on behalf of individuals and families, provide information about hospital services and help with referrals to Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations. |

You may work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues who can operate as cultural brokers. However, it is important to acknowledge that not every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person can act as a cultural broker in every situation.

For example, if an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleague comes from a different community than the one who you are working with, it may be inappropriate for them to act as a cultural broker in the local community.



### Video: Cultural brokerage

This video explains the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural brokers within healthcare in a health service in the Northern Territory: [aspirelr.link/yt-cultural-brokerage](https://aspirelr.link/yt-cultural-brokerage)



Make a list of some of the duties of a cultural broker identified in the video.

## Situations requiring a cultural broker

Here are some situations where you might need a cultural broker and the role of a cultural broker:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| You or your service has only just started engaging with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community             | A cultural broker can help facilitate a smooth introduction.  |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are not using your service  | A cultural broker can provide non-Indigenous workers with support to ensure they are providing a culturally competent practice. |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, families or communities need to make key decisions                       | A cultural broker can help all parties understand the circumstances and implications.   |
| There is a need for negotiation or mediation with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, family or community | A cultural broker can explain the point of view of the person, family or community and help them advocate for themselves.       |
| Complex processes need to be explained and understood   | A cultural broker can help communicate complex processes, such as funding applications.   |

Sources: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/jcu-connect/ethics-and-integrity/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-research-ethics/definitions-roles-and-responsibilities-in-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-research> <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2014/200/11/cultural-brokers>

## Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreters

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in remote areas are often multilingual.**

About 40 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote communities speak an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language as their first language, compared to about 2 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in metropolitan areas.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreters can function as cultural brokers by improving communication with First Nations people whose first language is not English.

A range of services provide access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreters. One example is the Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) in the Northern Territory. The AIS has more than 400 registered interpreters and covers over 100 languages and dialects.

You can read more about the AIS here: [aspirelr.link/aboriginal-interpreter-service](https://aspirelr.link/aboriginal-interpreter-service)

There are numerous risks involved in using untrained interpreters, such as family members or friends, to interpret for a person who does not speak English as a first language. This includes the potential for breaches of the person's privacy but also for misinformation in communication about health advice that could have serious consequences.

Professional interpreters, on the other hand, are bound by a code of ethics which ensures the privacy of the individuals they are working with.

## Working with interpreters

If you plan on working with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interpreter, here are a few basic rules to follow:

### Before the session:

- Provide the interpreter with information about the individual, such as their name and age.
- Brief the interpreter on the purpose of the discussion with the person.
- Ask the adviser if there are any cultural issues you need to attend to during the discussion; for example, seating arrangements.

### At the start of the session:

- Explain the role of the interpreter to the individual; some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will have never worked with an interpreter.
- Make sure the person understands that the interpreter only interprets what you are saying; they cannot advocate for them, or give them advice.
- Make sure the person understands issues relating to privacy and confidentiality.

### During the session:

- Use short statements, preferably in plain English.
- Speak directly to the individual, rather than to the interpreter.
- Do not ask the interpreter for their opinion; the interpreter is required to remain impartial.



## Example

### Engage with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interpreters and colleagues as cultural brokers

Sofia works as a project officer at a not-for-profit community organisation that works with remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory to improve outcomes for children and families.

Sofia is visiting one of the remote communities that her organisation is partnering with to deliver programs for pre-school children. As part of her visit, Sofia is speaking with some local families to learn more about their goals and priorities. Because some of the families she is talking with prefer to speak in languages other than English, Sofia is working with an interpreter.

Prior to speaking with the first family, Sofia explains the purpose of the discussions to the interpreter and the interpreter advises Sofia about the most appropriate seating arrangements. Sofia tells the interpreter the names of the people in the first family she is going to speak with and does the same for each subsequent family she meets with.

## Practice Task 6

### Question 1

Explain the role of a cultural broker.



**Question 2**

In which of the following situations would a cultural broker be required? Tick all that apply.

- An organisation is beginning to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.
- When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients are not using a service.
- When an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client has made a complaint about the service they received.
- A health condition needs to be explained to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patient in a hospital.
- An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person speaks English as a second language.

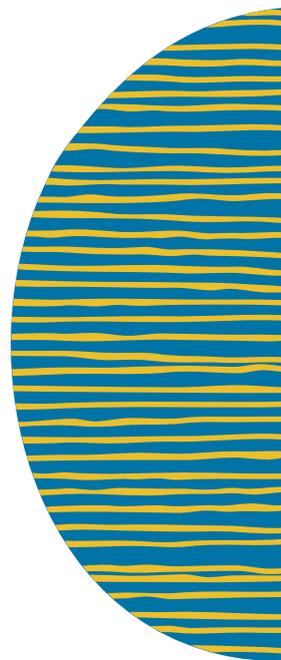
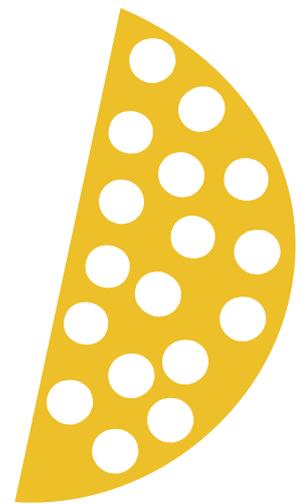
**Question 3**

Suggest two things a worker needs to do to prepare an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interpreter for a session or meeting.



## Summary

- Our work practices are informed by our cultural values and beliefs.
- When working with a client, both the culture of the worker and the culture of the client influence communication, the relationship and the outcomes of the interaction.
- Cultural bias is when people judge or interpret situations and actions based on the standards of their own culture.
- People see, interpret and evaluate things in different ways. Misunderstandings can easily arise if a person uses their own view of the world to make sense of somebody else's reality.
- Cultural awareness is the first step towards achieving cultural safety. When a worker is culturally aware, they understand individual differences between themselves and people of other backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures and nationalities.
- A cultural broker is a person who mediates between people of different cultural backgrounds for a particular purpose.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreters can function as cultural brokers by improving communication with First Nations people whose first language is not English.
- Approximately 40 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote communities speak an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language as their first language.





# Learning Checkpoint 2

## Model cultural safety in own work

### Part A

1. Briefly outline how a worker's self-reflection on their own culture can increase their awareness of how different cultures influence work practices.

2. Which of the following should happen if an interpreter is required? Tick all that apply.

- Inform the client about the interpreter's qualifications.
- Explain the role of the interpreter to the client.
- Make sure the client understands that the interpreter cannot give them advice.
- Make sure the client understands that their privacy and confidentiality will be respected.
- Invite the client to nominate a family member to be an interpreter.

3. List two things a worker can do to improve their understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures and their engagement with services.



4. Identify two work practices that show respect for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.

## Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

### Case study

Ronelle is a family support worker at an organisation based in regional Queensland. She is currently working with two Aboriginal families.

The first family are the Randalls who have three children and moved to Queensland from New South Wales (NSW). Their people come from the Northern Rivers region of NSW.

The second family comprises Mac and Pearl Connor and their four children. Mac, Pearl and their extended family are the Traditional Owners of the land where Ronelle works.

Ronelle is establishing a positive rapport with the Randall family. However, her relationship with Mac and Pearl is slow to develop; they are not responding to her phone calls and seem reluctant to engage with her.

Ronelle finds out from a colleague that Mac's cousin has died recently and the family will be grieving for their relative in a bush camp for several weeks. Ronelle's first thought when she hears this news is that the children will miss school and the conditions in the bush camp will be rough and dirty.



- 1. Identify Ronelle’s cultural bias and suggest what she can do to increase her awareness of that bias.**

To build rapport with Mac and Pearl, Ronelle wants to ask an Aboriginal colleague to act as a cultural broker at her next meeting with the family.

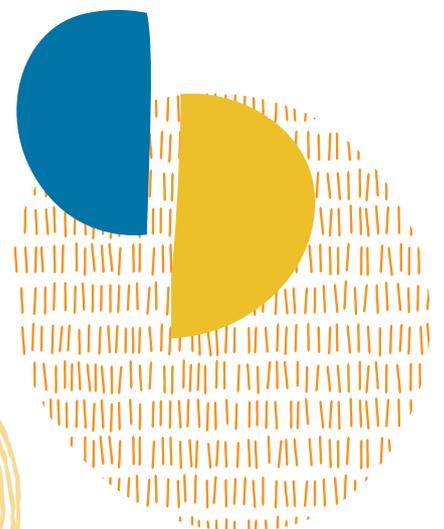
- 2. Suggest why engaging a colleague as a cultural broker may not be appropriate in this situation.**

- 3. Identify two communication techniques that Ronelle can use to show respect for the cultural differences between herself and the families she is supporting.**



## Topic 3: Develop strategies for improved cultural safety

- 3A Support and promote effective partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities
- 3B Document ways to support the delivery of culturally safe services and programs to increase participation
- 3C Integrate strategies that encourage self-determination and community control



# 3A

## Support and promote effective partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities

### **Effective partnerships lay the groundwork for improved cultural safety.**

Effective partnerships are founded on the principles of trust, empathy and respect:

- Communication that is honest and respectful helps build the trust that is essential to an effective partnership.
- Empathy helps people feel connected to each other and encourages people to accept differences.
- Respect for diversity allows people to communicate their needs, find common ground and work together to achieve shared goals.

In practice, this means that in an effective partnership the people and parties involved demonstrate the following principles and practices:

- Everyone is equal
- People listen and talk to each other
- Each person contributes in their own way
- Each person's contribution is valued and respected, even if there are differences of opinion
- People try to understand each other's point of view

The Closing the Gap Clearinghouse identified a range of conditions that enable effective relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Some of these are listed in the table below.

By enhancing these conditions, organisations can support the development of effective engagement between staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

#### **Conditions that enable effective partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. What works:**

- An appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, cultures and contemporary social dynamics and having the cultural competency to respond to these.
- Valuing the cultural skills and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.



**Conditions that enable effective partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. What works:**

- The purpose and goals of the partnership are relevant and meaningful to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
- Long-term relationships of trust, respect and honesty.
- Accessible, ongoing communication and information.
- The agency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities is built into the partnership from the beginning. Consulting with people or providing them with information is not the same as partnership.
- The partnership is built upon existing governance structures within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- The partnership is empowering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities and builds on their strengths and assets rather than deficits or gaps.

In addition to identifying what works when it comes to partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse also identified what does not work. Some of these conditions are listed in the table below:

**Conditions that enable effective partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. What does not work:**

- Hurried, one-off interactions that have been organised without input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.
- Fragmented or *siloed* approaches whereby different people and teams within an organisation seek to develop partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities for different purposes.
- Staff make inaccurate assumptions about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, its membership, governance and who can represent its views.
- Staff fail to acknowledge the diversity within any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

You can support the development of effective partnerships between staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities by helping to:

- create conditions that encourage effective partnerships
- discourage conditions that do not work for building effective partnerships.

How you do this will depend upon the nature and scope of your role, the current conditions within your organisation and your organisation's structure. For example, your organisation may be strong in some areas but not in others. If this is the case you can focus on building upon specific strengths and gaps.

Read more about the conditions for effective relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at: [aspirelr.link/engaging-indigenous-australia](https://aspirelr.link/engaging-indigenous-australia)

## Example

### Support and promote effective partnerships

Maya works as a project officer at an organisation that supports families affected by substance misuse. Maya's organisation wants to improve the cultural safety of the services and programs they provide.

As a first step, Maya and the management team meet to discuss how they can move forward with their plan. Neither Maya nor any other members of the team are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The first suggestion put forward is to put up an Aboriginal flag and a Torres Strait Islander flag in the reception area to help make Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients feel more welcome.

Maya suggests that they need to establish a partnership with a local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander group and work with them to build a more culturally safe and welcoming service.

## The process of building partnerships

It takes time to build relationships of trust and respect with any community. Some factors to be mindful of when developing partnerships with a local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community include the following:

- If possible look for a partnership with more than one local group to respect the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- Look at a community's history without getting involved in its politics.
- Accept opportunities to connect if an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander group or organisation reaches out.
- Do not only seek out relationships when funding opportunities arise and be careful not to make promises you cannot keep, especially where funding is involved.
- Look for small opportunities to work with communities and build on these over time.
- Allow time and be patient as it takes time for partnerships to develop.
- Be mindful of cultural practices; for example, **Sorry Business**, that will generally take priority over other matters such as partnerships with non-Indigenous organisations.

### Sorry Business

A period of cultural practices and protocols relating to the funeral and bereavement of a deceased person. Protocols differ across different communities.



Read more about supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships here: [aspirelr.link/indigenous-aus-partnership-kit](https://aspirelr.link/indigenous-aus-partnership-kit)

## Identify and utilise resources to promote partnerships

Instead of starting from scratch, consider what resources are already available to you and your organisation. The table below outlines some examples. You can identify other available resources by speaking with your manager, colleagues and professional networks.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Build upon existing partnerships</b></p>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rather than starting a new partnership to address issues around cultural safety, propose an expansion of existing partnerships. Your organisation might have existing partnerships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisations such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aboriginal maternal health care services or early learning services</li> <li>- mental health services for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Build upon your existing professional connections and networks</b></p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You might have a colleague who has a positive relationship with the local Aboriginal community, a local Elder or homeland council.</li> <li>• As the first step towards building a partnership, your colleague might be able to help you establish connections and provide an introduction to these people and groups.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Identify and build upon existing connections within your organisation</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A team from another department within your organisation may have worked with a local Indigenous-led organisation in the past. This team may be able to help you build on or revitalise that connection as the first step towards building a longer-term partnership.</li> <li>• If your organisation has a Reconciliation Action Plan, the RAP Advisory or Working Group may have existing connections with local Indigenous-led organisations.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read more about reconciliation action plans here: <a href="https://aspirelr.link/rap-hub">aspirelr.link/rap-hub</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Your organisation might have an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander worker or workforce who can provide you with information about initiating and maintaining partnerships with local First Nations peoples and communities.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Share resources</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perhaps your organisation has a meeting room that the local Aboriginal community can use, or transport they can use to attend an important event. Sharing resources can help to build trust and points of connection.</li> </ul>   |



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Attend local cultural events</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By attending local cultural events, such as NAIDOC Week events, you can learn more about the local community and potentially establish connections as the starting point for building trust.</li><li>- You can read more about NAIDOC Week here: <a href="https://aspirelr.link/naidoc">aspirelr.link/naidoc</a></li></ul>   |
| <b>Recognise opportunities for capacity-building</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There might be a particular skill or strength that the local First Nations community would like to build on, such as advocacy skills among their young people.</li><li>• Your organisation might already offer advocacy training for young people. Using that resource to support local First Nations young people could help to establish the foundations for an effective partnership.</li></ul> |

## Practice Task 7

### Question 1

Identify at least three things to consider when planning to establish a partnership with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.



**Question 2**

Suggest three ways an organisation can identify resources that will help to establish and promote their partnership relationship.

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their answer to the question.

# 3 B

## Document ways to support the delivery of culturally safe services and programs to increase participation

### **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities need to be meaningfully involved in the delivery of services and programs.**

Throughout this Learner Guide, you have been provided with information about what cultural safety means and why it is important to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Ultimately, the purpose of devising culturally safe health and community services and programs is to ensure that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples use those services and programs for the benefit of themselves, their families and communities.

If services and programs are not culturally safe, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are unlikely to use them and, even if they do use them, they are unlikely to benefit from those services and programs. In some cases, they may even be harmed by them.

### **Barriers to participation in services and programs**

The reason why some families do not access services and programs is simply that they do not need them. However, this is often because of barriers that make access and participation difficult.

Barriers to access and participation include:

- structural barriers; such as the cost of services, inaccessible locations and inflexible appointment systems
- family level barriers; such as a lack of transport, unstable housing and physical and mental health issues
- relational barriers; which are the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that undermine the ability of service providers and clients to relate to each other. These include:
  - service providers' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours; such as insensitive or judgemental attitudes, or a lack of cultural awareness
  - families' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours; such as a lack of trust in service providers or a lack of confidence interacting with staff.



These barriers affect some people more than others, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. This is demonstrated in the statistics regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's use of health and community services.

For example, Medicare item claims for medical specialists and psychology services are lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples than non-Indigenous people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are less likely to participate in a BreastScreen program than non-Indigenous women.

As a single action, increasing the availability of services will not resolve lower rates of participation in health and community services among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is because the barriers they face in accessing services relate to a range of factors more complicated than whether a service or program is available. Other factors include whether they can physically get to the service, and whether the program is culturally safe.

### **Culturally safe processes**

Based on the information you have learned you may already have some ideas about ways you might support the delivery of culturally safe services and programs in your organisation. However, be aware that it is essential to involve First Nations peoples and communities in the process of devising culturally safe programs and services. After all, only they can tell you what culturally safe means to them. They are a unique community with a unique history, strengths, assets and challenges.

As a partner in the process of devising culturally safe services and programs you can share your thoughts and ideas. Perhaps, for example, you might recommend changes to a program to make it more accessible for Aboriginal people, but you must also listen to the viewpoints of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. The priorities of your organisation may not be the same as the priorities of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. The issues need to be worked through in order to build an effective partnership.

Any partnership that undermines the agency of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, whereby you or your organisation is making decisions on behalf of First Nations people rather than with them, is unlikely to be effective.

Furthermore, if the process for devising culturally safe services and programs does not involve Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples it is, by its very nature, not culturally safe. The results of such a process are unlikely to lead to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Additionally, the process demonstrates to local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities that you and your organisation are not willing or able to work with them.

Considering the history of relationships between First Nations and non-Indigenous communities in Australia, it is not surprising that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities would be unlikely to engage with organisations that fail to take their viewpoints and perspectives into account. Such approaches are unlikely to encourage increased participation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the services and programs that your organisation provides.

## **Involve service users in planning and delivering services**

Involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the delivery of services is especially important because, in the past, they have been left out of decisions that impact their families and communities.

Here are some possible strategies to involve Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in planning and delivering services and programs:

- Hold forums or discussion groups with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. The group should comprise a broad representation of the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community and include men, women and people of different ages.
- Remember the issues surrounding consultation fatigue. In a community with consultation fatigue, forming a forum or discussion group may not be the most effective approach. You could consider asking a local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person to help you co-facilitate the forum or discussion group. This might encourage Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people from the community to get involved.
- Work with an existing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander group in the community. An existing group may be able to work with you and your organisation to plan and deliver culturally safe services.
- Work with an Indigenous-led organisation. A local Indigenous-led organisation may be able to work with you to plan and deliver culturally safe services and programs, or help you establish a process for involving local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the planning and delivery of services.
- Work with, build on or establish an advisory group. Many health and community services have an advisory group that includes clients or representatives from the local community.
- If your organisation:
  - already has an advisory group that includes Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, you could work with the group to develop a process for involving them in planning and delivering services



- has an advisory group that does not include Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, you could work with your Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander networks and partners to find new Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members for the advisory group
- does not have an advisory group, you could work with other people in your organisation to establish an advisory group that includes Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

## Document ways to encourage participation

Cultural safety is an ongoing learning process. There is no point at which you will know everything you need to know about creating culturally safe services and programs. People and communities continually change, and new knowledge and new ways of doing things will be discovered over time.

Documenting ways to support the delivery of culturally safe services and programs will help other people and teams within, and potentially beyond, your organisation to participate. It will also help you evaluate the strategies you develop.

You could use this opportunity to build the strengths of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities you are working with. For example, perhaps you could write the document with a group of young Aboriginal people from the local community who are interested in developing their writing skills.

The document you produce could be:

- a memo or brief report
- a set of guidelines
- a policy or procedure
- a manual
- an intranet blog entry or article.

The document you write should outline the lessons you have learned about how to support the delivery of services and programs that are culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities and encourage their increased participation.

Remember to not speak on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities you are working with.

Other information you might document is listed below. However, these are suggestions only. What you include in your document will depend upon the work you have done and the needs, requirements and preferences of your organisation.

- The lessons learned from establishing, building and maintaining partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities

- The resources that were useful in the process of building partnerships; for example, local Indigenous-led organisations
- The structure of partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities
- Lessons learned from involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in the planning and delivery of services
- A description of what decisions were made about culturally safe services and programs, and how those decisions were made

## Example

### Devise and document ways to support the delivery of culturally safe services and programs

Maya has played a lead role in developing partnerships between staff and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.

In partnership with a group of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, Maya and her organisation have developed a list of recommendations for improving the delivery of culturally safe services and programs. Her manager has asked her to document what the partnership group came up with and what was learned during the process.

One of the members of the partnership group is a 22-year-old Aboriginal man, Patrick, who has just finished a course on advocacy and is keen to get some practical experience. The Elders in the local Aboriginal community have expressed their support for Patrick to be more involved so he can pass on these skills to other young people in the community.

Maya and Patrick produce a brief report for Maya's manager and the partnership group.



## Clarity and conciseness

Any document you write for professional purposes should be clear and concise. Here are some tips to help you write a clear and concise document.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Keep it brief                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use short sentences.</li> <li>• Cut out unnecessary words. For example, do not say 'the issue was carefully considered', just say 'the issue was considered'.</li> </ul>  |
| Use simple, concrete language               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not use long words when a shorter word can be used instead. For example, 'use' instead of 'utilise'.</li> <li>• Be precise. Avoid vague terminology such as 'the current circumstances'.</li> <li>• Avoid 'flowery' language; that is, elaborate and flamboyant language.</li> </ul> |
| Use an appropriate layout for your document | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a table to set out the information. This will make it easy to compare different options.</li> <li>• Where appropriate, use bullet points so the information is easy to read.</li> </ul>   |

Adapted from: <https://www.writerscentre.com.au/blog/how-to-be-a-better-business-writer/> and <https://www.forbes.com/2010/05/03/better-business-writing-leadership-careers-tips>

## Culturally appropriate and respectful written language

When writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, use culturally appropriate and respectful language. Basic respectful language uses:

- specific terms, such as the name of a community, rather than broader terms
- plurals when speaking about collectives; for example, peoples, cultures, in recognition of diversity
- present tense, unless speaking about a past event
- language that is empowering and reflects a **strengths-based approach**.

For more guidance on culturally appropriate and respectful language when writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities visit: [aspirelr.link/culturally-appropriate-language](https://aspirelr.link/culturally-appropriate-language)

### Strengths-based approach

Recognises that all individuals are resourceful and resilient experts in their lives, and can progress in a way that enhances their quality of life.



## Practice Task 8

### Question 1

Briefly outline why the meaningful involvement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples is needed to deliver culturally safe services and programs and encourage increased participation.

### Question 2

Which of the following statements are examples of respectful written language about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples? Tick all that apply.

- Aboriginal culture is complex.
- Torres Strait Islander peoples once had diverse customs.
- In the present-day, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples speak more than 100 different languages.
- The traditional owners of this area are the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin nation.
- Aboriginal people once had a proud and vibrant culture.

# 3C

## Integrate strategies that encourage self-determination and community control

**Self-determination and community control are especially significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.**

Self-determination is a human right. The Australian Human Rights Commission states that: 'The loss of the right to self-determination and community control plays a central role in the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities today'.

People understand and define self-determination differently, however essentially self-determination is about a person's right to shape their own life.

When we have self-determination, we:

- participate in decisions that affect our lives
- have the freedom to live well and to decide what *living well* means, according to our beliefs and values
- have control over our lives, including the economic, social and cultural aspects.

### Community control

**Community control allows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to be self-determining.**

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) are some of the most well-known examples of Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in Australia. ACCHOs are primary health care services initiated and operated by local Aboriginal communities.

The first ACCHO was established in Redfern in 1971 in response to the local Aboriginal communities' experiences of racism in mainstream health services and the need for culturally safe health services for local Aboriginal peoples.

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) defines Aboriginal community control in health services as, 'a process which allows the local Aboriginal community to be involved in its affairs in accordance with whatever protocols or procedures are determined by the Community'.

Community control is especially important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities because programs and services in Australia have often been imposed upon them, taking away their right to self-determination.

The NACCHO has a map that indicates the location of ACCHOs across Australia: [aspirelr.link/naccho-map](https://aspirelr.link/naccho-map)

Here are some other examples of community-controlled organisations and peak bodies in Australia:

- Winanga-Li Aboriginal Child and Family Centre – [aspirelr.link/winanga-li](https://aspirelr.link/winanga-li)
- The Palm Island Community Company – [aspirelr.link/picc](https://aspirelr.link/picc)
- Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (ALRM), South Australia – [aspirelr.link/almr](https://aspirelr.link/almr)
- The Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd (VACSAL) – [aspirelr.link/vacsal](https://aspirelr.link/vacsal)

## Integrating strategies

Health and community organisations can integrate strategies to encourage self-determination and community control. This can be done by:

- asking Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients for feedback on how services and programs could be improved to meet their needs
- including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the internal groups that your organisation relies upon for advice and feedback, such as advisory or leadership groups
- planning and delivering services and programs in partnership with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander colleagues, community representatives, Elders and/or Indigenous-led organisations
- working towards building ongoing effective partnerships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities
- working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities to identify their needs and how those needs could be addressed through your organisation's services and programs
- building opportunities within your organisation to enhance the capacities that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities have identified as important to them
- demonstrating support for and promoting initiatives designed to support self-determination, such as the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart'.

Resources for supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart are available at: [aspirelr.link/uluru-statement-from-the-heart](https://aspirelr.link/uluru-statement-from-the-heart)

**Video: Uluru Statement from the Heart**

Watch this video to learn more about the Uluru Statement from the Heart:  
[aspirelr.link/uluru-statement-from-the-heart-video](https://aspirelr.link/uluru-statement-from-the-heart-video)



## Example

### Integrate strategies that encourage self-determination and community control

Maya's organisation is looking at ways to encourage self-determination and community control for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who use their services.

The organisation already has an established partnership group comprising staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from the local community. However, there are no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples on the senior management group or the Board. The local Aboriginal community suggests the inclusion of a local Elder on the organisation's Board as they believe the organisation is currently limited in its ability to really influence the programs and services that it delivers. Another possibility they are looking into is developing a closer partnership with a local Indigenous-led organisation to co-facilitate programs for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients.

## Practice Task 9

### Question 1

Briefly outline the relationship between self-determination and community control.

## Question 2

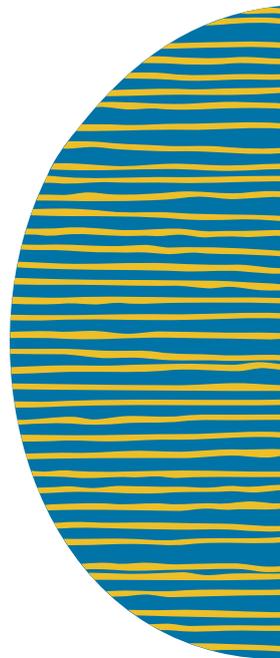
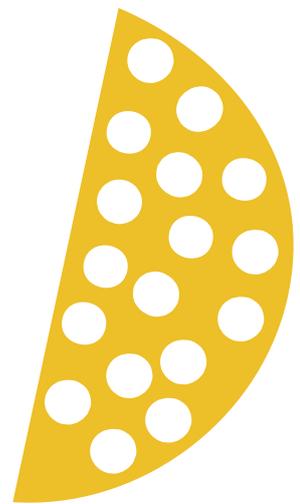
Which of the following are examples of strategies that provide for self-determination?  
Tick all that apply.

- Asking an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Elder for advice on how to improve services and programs
- Involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander colleagues and community representatives in the development and planning of services to meet their needs
- Making a list of the needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities and asking an Indigenous-led organisation to review the list
- Suggesting ways to enhance the capacities that your organisation has identified as important to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Decorating the foyer of the organisation with an Aboriginal flag



## Summary

- Effective partnerships are founded upon principles such as trust, empathy and respect.
- Workers can support the development of effective partnerships between staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities by creating conditions that encourage effective partnerships.
- It takes time for workers and organisations to build relationships of trust and respect with a community.
- If services and programs are not culturally safe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are unlikely to use them. Additionally, even if they do use them they are unlikely to benefit from them.
- The priorities of a worker's organisation may not be the same as the priorities of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities; working through these issues requires an effective partnership.
- Involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the delivery of services is especially important because, in the past, they have been left out of decisions that impact their families and communities.
- People understand and define self-determination differently, but essentially self-determination is about a person's right to shape their own life.
- Community control is especially important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities because programs and services have often been imposed upon them, taking away their right to self-determination.





# Learning Checkpoint 3

## Develop strategies for improved cultural safety

### Part A

1. Which of the following conditions might discourage effective partnerships between staff and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities? Tick all that apply.

- A one-off interaction that meets project deadlines
- Teams or departments from a single organisation decide to develop partnerships with an Aboriginal community
- A partnership that takes many years to develop
- Staff deciding who can represent the local First Nations community's views

2. Suggest three resources that can be used to promote partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

3. Identify at least one thing a worker can do to encourage the participation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.



4. List three things a worker can do to ensure the documents they produce are clear and concise.

5. Which of the following are examples of self-determination? Tick all that apply.

- Being part of decision making about things that affect quality of life
- The freedom to live well and be healthy
- The freedom to decide what *living well* means, according to own beliefs and values
- Freedom to control the economy
- The right to delegate decision-making to external parties

6. Explain why community control is important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.



## Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

### Case study

Alex is a team leader at an organisation that provides support to families who have been involved with the child protection system.

Alex wants to improve the cultural safety of his support team that interacts with the families.

The first thing Alex wants to do is develop effective partnerships between his team and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families and their communities.

1. List three things that Alex needs to be mindful of when developing partnerships between his team and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.



- 2.** List three ways that Alex could integrate strategies into the services and programs to encourage Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities' self-determination and community control.





## Topic 4: Evaluate cultural safety strategies

- 4A Agree on outcomes to measure cultural safety strategies
- 4B Involve Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in evaluations
- 4C Evaluate programs and services against desired outcomes and revise strategies



# 4A

## Agree on outcomes to measure cultural safety strategies

**The outcomes of cultural safety strategies need to be agreed with the people for whom the strategies were designed.**

Involving the people for whom a strategy has been designed aligns with the principles of self-determination and community control and helps to ensure that strategies are effective.

### Outcomes

Changes that occur due to an activity or program.

### Outputs

The activities that are delivered to achieve an outcome.

**Outcomes** are not the same as **outputs**. Outcomes are events, or changes in conditions or behaviour, that indicate progress towards a goal. Outputs, on the other hand, are the things that are delivered as part of the strategy, such as:

- professional development sessions for staff
- the development of new organisational policies
- the establishment of an advisory group.

Outcomes are the changes that occur as a result of the outputs.

Here are some examples of outputs and outcomes of cultural safety strategies.

| Strategy  | Outputs   | Outcomes  |
|---|---|---|
| In-house cultural awareness training for staff  | Four one-hour sessions facilitated by a local Indigenous-led organisation   | Improved cultural awareness among staff   |
| Revising the staff code of conduct to align with the principles of cultural safety                            | Online consultation with staff and four brainstorming sessions with the advisory group                                    | The organisation's code of conduct reflects the principles of cultural safety   |
| Establishing an Indigenous-led Advisory Group to work in partnership with local health and community services | Four consultation sessions with local Aboriginal organisations and two public forums to decide upon members and structure | An Indigenous-led Advisory Group has been established comprising seven Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people from the local community |

### Decide on outcomes

The outcomes of a strategy should reflect the goals of the people for whom the strategy has been devised as well as other key stakeholders. For example, if your organisation has developed a strategy for local young parents, the outcomes of that strategy should reflect the goals of local young parents. What do they want to achieve? What is important to them?



If the people for whom a strategy has been designed are not involved in deciding the desired outcomes the strategy may not be as effective. This is because when a strategy does not align with the goals of the people it is targeting, they will be less interested in participating. On the other hand, when those people are involved in deciding the outcomes of a strategy, they are more likely to be engaged and enthusiastic because they have an investment in it.

## Example

### Agree on outcomes to measure cultural safety strategies

Tora is a community engagement officer at a community-based health service located in a rural area.

One of the programs that the health service runs is a drop-in service for local teenagers and young people. Youth workers are available at the service to provide participants with support and information about issues that concern them, such as sexual health, relationships and family conflict.

In consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, the team has developed a strategy to make the drop-in service more culturally safe. The strategy includes:

- the engagement of an Aboriginal youth worker from a local Indigenous-led service
- amendments to the code of conduct for staff that relate specifically to respecting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and cultures
- an annual mini-festival led by local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples focusing on the music, art and dance of the Traditional Owners of the local area.

Tora and the team believed the outcome of having culturally safe programs should be to increase the participation of young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the drop-in service. However, after consulting with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, she finds that decreasing racism in the local community is the most important outcome for the young people attending the drop-in service.

As a result of this discussion, two outcomes for the strategy are agreed:

- to increase the participation of young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the drop-in service
- to improve cultural awareness among drop-in service participants.



## Agree on outcomes

When First Nations peoples decide what is important to them and their communities, it is not being decided for them. A group of stakeholders might be involved in making decisions about outcomes such as:

- funding bodies
- workers who will be delivering the strategy
- representatives from the community, such as Elders
- evaluation consultants/advisors.

Agreeing on outcomes with different people, representatives and communities may not be an easy or straightforward task. Different groups have different priorities and interests.

Collaborative ways of working may be needed to find agreement on outcomes. Collaboration involves people with diverse expertise working together to accomplish common goals.

### Tips on how to promote and facilitate collaboration when working with others:

- Encourage people to ask questions and explore ideas.
- Even if an idea seems radical, look for reasons to explore the idea further rather than looking for reasons not to explore it.
- Give people opportunities to debate ideas and encourage friendly, constructive debate.
- Make sure everyone has a voice by giving people opportunities to communicate their viewpoints in different ways.
- Give people time to articulate their ideas. Do not discount an idea just because the person communicating it is having difficulty explaining it.
- Model a calm approach when obstacles and problems arise. This will encourage others to persevere with the goal, rather than giving up.

Sources: <https://blog.jostle.me/blog/6-collaboration-skills-and-how-to-foster-them> <https://hbr.org/2019/01/how-to-unlock-your-teams-creativity> <https://hbr.org/1998/09/how-to-kill-creativity>



## Develop outcomes

One common tool used to ensure outcomes meet requirements is the SMART acronym.

The table below describes each component of the SMART acronym and explains why each component is important when developing outcomes:

| SMART acronym | Description   | Why it is important  |
|---------------|---|--|
| Specific      | Outcomes should be clear and precise: Who, what, where and when?  | Ensures that everyone understands what they are working towards                    |
| Measurable    | Outcomes should be quantifiable: How many, how much?  | Helps the team determine whether they are making progress                          |
| Achievable    | Outcomes should be achievable: How will you accomplish it? What steps need to be taken to accomplish the objective?   | Helps to set the strategy up for success   |
| Realistic     | Outcomes should be practical: Is there the budget to do this? Is there enough time to do this? Do you (your team) have the knowledge and skills to do this? |  |
| Timebound     | Outcomes should have a deadline: What needs to be achieved and by when?   | Helps the team determine whether they are making progress within the required time |

When you are developing outcomes with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, they must be involved in the process of deciding upon each of these components. For example, they should be involved in determining what level of change is realistic given the resources available to their communities. Again, this should be a collaborative process; each party is bringing essential knowledge and skills to the table.



Here are some examples of weak and strong outcomes:

| Weak outcomes   | Strong outcomes  |
|---|--|
| To increase participation of Aboriginal people in the mentoring program             | To increase the number of Aboriginal people completing the mentoring program by 25% by 31 July 2023  |
| To increase teachers' knowledge about Traditional Owners                            | To increase knowledge about the Traditional Owners of the local community among primary school teachers at the local public and Catholic primary schools by 11 December 2022 |
| To improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experience of our service | To increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who report a feeling of cultural safety by 50% by the end of the 2022–2023 financial year        |

## Practice Task 10

### Question 1

Briefly outline the difference between an output and an outcome.

### Question 2

Which of the following principles are included in the SMART acronym?

Tick all that apply.

- Specific
- Measurable
- Accessible
- Reliable
- Timebound

# 4B

## Involve Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in evaluations

**Involving service users in evaluations is becoming a common strategy among health and community services.**

Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all levels of an evaluation is one of the principles of ethical practice for professionals involved in evaluation.

When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are involved in the evaluation of strategies, programs or services, they should be viewed as equal partners. They also have the right to have their contributions to an evaluation acknowledged.

Involving service users in evaluations has many benefits for both the organisation and service users. For example, service users will have useful information about the best ways of collecting data from other service users. This could lead to higher rates of participation in the evaluation, thereby leading to richer and more comprehensive evaluation data.

Additionally, involving service users in evaluations can help them build skills, knowledge and capacities. For example, a young woman who gains experience collecting and analysing data as part of the evaluation of a program could use that experience to obtain employment where this skill is needed.

| Ways that service users can be involved   |  | Examples of service user involvement  |
|---|--|---|
|  | Advising on and contributing to evaluation processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advising services on:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the best way to collect data from service users; for example, a survey, focus group, informal consultations</li><li>- when and where to collect data</li></ul></li><li>• Helping to design evaluation tools; for example, survey questions</li></ul> |
|  | Collecting data                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handing out surveys to people attending a program and collecting the completed forms</li><li>• Facilitating a focus group with the attendees of a service</li><li>• Interviewing people using a service to find out what is and is not working</li></ul>  |

| Ways that service users can be involved   |                                    | Examples of service user involvement  |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
|  | Analysing data                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping to make sense of data based on participants' responses</li> <li>Receiving training on how to analyse survey and interview data and being employed to assist with this process</li> </ul>   |
|  | Reporting upon evaluation findings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Either reporting to their own communities and/or reporting to the organisation itself</li> <li>Reporting findings of an evaluation to communities is recommended, especially if the community has been involved in advising upon or developing the strategy. This is offering something in return for their input</li> </ul> |

Prior to starting the evaluation, work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to determine which community members may be able to assist with the evaluation and incorporate their salary into your budget.

For more information about ethical evaluation practices in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings, visit: [aspirelr.link/ethical-evaluation-practices](https://aspirelr.link/ethical-evaluation-practices)

## Example

### Involve Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in evaluations

Luca is employed as a community development officer at an organisation that provides a range of health and community services and supports to families living in an inner-city area.

Luca has worked with a group of Aboriginal people from the local community to improve cultural safety in the peer support programs his organisation runs for young parents. The strategy involved the development of an Indigenous-led peer support program, delivered by a local Indigenous-led organisation in partnership with Luca's organisation.

Luca planned on collecting data to evaluate the strategy from service users via a written survey. However, when he spoke with Aboriginal people he found out that young parents are more comfortable and likely to respond to an online survey.



Based on this information the team devises an online survey to evaluate the strategy. As a result, 65 parents complete the survey. This gives Luca and his colleagues a rich source of data that they then use to make changes to the support group, so it better meets young Aboriginal parents' needs.

Over the next few months, participation in the Indigenous-led peer support group continues to increase. The facilitators believe that the tweaks made to the program, based on the data from the online survey, has made the program more accessible and appealing to young Aboriginal parents.

## Practice Task 11

### Question 1

List at least two ways service users can be involved in the evaluation of their services and programs.

### Question 2

Suggest how involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander service users in evaluating a program could benefit the organisation delivering that program.

# 4C

## Evaluate programs and services against the desired outcomes and revise strategies

**To determine whether programs and services are effective, workers need to evaluate them against the outcomes that were agreed on.**

The process of evaluation, such as what and how data is collected and analysed, will depend upon what is feasible and appropriate within the organisation and for the service users.

The findings of an evaluation will provide information about what is and is not working. Organisations can then use this information to revise strategies so they are more effective.

### Analyse data

The evaluation of programs and services must involve data analysis.

When evaluating programs and services against desired outcomes, you will need to measure whether the strategy has achieved the outcomes within the relevant time frame. This requires the analysis of data.

The data you and your team have collected will either be quantitative or qualitative.

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Quantitative data</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Numerical data or data that can easily be converted into numbers</li><li>• It tells us how much, how many and how often</li><li>• Typically collected via surveys</li></ul>    |
| <b>Qualitative data</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data expressed in words</li><li>• It tells us about attitudes, perceptions, experiences and behaviours</li><li>• Typically collected via focus groups and interviews</li></ul> |

Quantitative data is analysed via techniques such as a calculation of:

- frequency, indicating how often something has occurred
- percentages, indicating the amount, number, or rate of something in relation to the whole
- the mean, which is the average score.



Here are some examples of the results of a quantitative analysis.

- 54 people attended the program.
- 53% of attendees were satisfied or very satisfied with the program.
- On average, participants attended 5 of the 7 sessions delivered as part of the program.

Qualitative data is analysed by identifying patterns and meanings. The most common method used for analysing qualitative data is a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves the identification of common issues, ideas and opinions.

### Video: Qualitative and quantitative data

This video explains the difference between qualitative and quantitative data:  
[aspirelr.link/yt-qualitative-quantitative-data](https://aspirelr.link/yt-qualitative-quantitative-data)



## Evaluate the achievement of outcomes

Use the findings of your data analysis to determine whether the outcomes have been achieved. Here are three examples of programs that have been evaluated against their desired outcomes:

| Desired outcome   | Data collected                   | Evaluation findings  | Have the desired outcomes been achieved?  |
|---|----------------------------------|--|---|
| To increase the number of Aboriginal people completing the mentoring program by 25% in Semester 1 2023 (when compared to Semester 4 2022)                     | Attendance data (quantitative)   | By the end of Semester 1 2023, there had been a 46% increase in the number of people completing the mentoring program when compared to Semester 4 2022 | The desired outcome has been achieved     |
| To improve the knowledge of 50 teachers about the Traditional Owners of the local community at a local public and Catholic primary school by 11 December 2022 | Teachers' feedback (qualitative) | Of the 77 teachers who signed up for the training, 43 agreed that their knowledge about the Traditional Owners of the local community had improved     | The desired outcome has not been achieved |



| Desired outcome   | Data collected                        | Evaluation findings   | Have the desired outcomes been achieved? |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| To increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who report a sense of cultural safety at our service by 50% in 2023 when compared to 2022 | Survey (quantitative and qualitative) | The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who report a sense of cultural safety at our service has increased by 68% | The desired outcome has been achieved    |

### Revise strategies

The analysis of evaluation data will provide an indication of what changes are required. For example, your team may have found that participants in a strategy reported difficulties attending an activity because it is too difficult to get to by public transport.

The changes required in this situation are obvious. Either the location of the activity needs to be shifted or participants need to be provided with an alternative way of getting to the activity, such as by hiring a private minibus.

Sometimes desired outcomes will not have been achieved and evaluation findings will not indicate what changes are required. In this case you will need to consult with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples from the local community, and other key stakeholders, to decide a way forward.

Even if the desired outcomes have been achieved, consultation can be useful to determine how success can be maintained in the long-term, or how to make the strategy even more successful.

Revising the strategy will not always be the best approach. For example, if a strategy is achieving the desired outcomes it may be safer to simply leave it as is rather than make changes. If a strategy has been very ineffective at achieving the desired outcomes, it may be better to devise a new strategy rather than trying to revise the old one.

As with all decisions regarding cultural safety strategies, these decisions need to be made with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples from the local community and key stakeholders.



## Example

### Evaluate programs and services against the desired outcomes and revise strategies

Poppy is a project officer at Western Health. Over the past six months, Poppy has worked in partnership with a group of Aboriginal families to develop two strategies to improve the cultural safety of Western Health services.

Now that they have analysed the data from the evaluation, they have found that one of the strategies to improve maternal health outcomes for Aboriginal women has been very successful. However, another strategy for Aboriginal fathers has not achieved the outcomes the partnership group sought to achieve.

Poppy and the partnership group discuss what revisions could be made to the program for Aboriginal fathers to make it more successful. Having discussed various options, including relocating the program, employing a new program facilitator and promoting the program more widely, the team decides to discontinue the program and develop a different strategy with more involvement from local Aboriginal men.

## Practice Task 12

### Question 1

Which of the following calculations are used to analyse quantitative data? Tick all that apply.

- Frequency
- The mean
- Common themes
- Content analysis
- Percentages



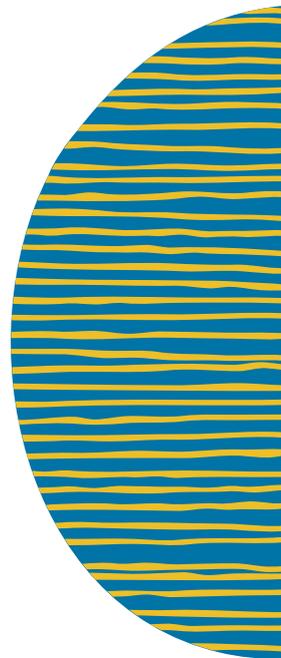
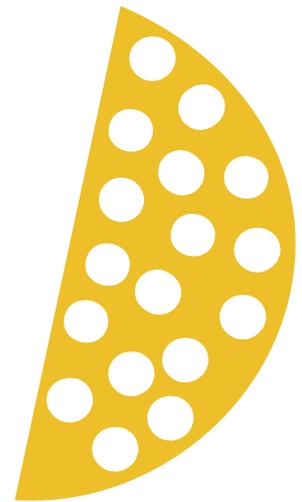
**Question 2**

Briefly outline why revising an ineffective strategy is not always the best approach.



## Summary

- Outcomes are events or changes in conditions or behaviour that indicate progress towards a goal. Outputs, on the other hand, are the things that are delivered as part of a strategy.
- The outcomes of a strategy should reflect the goals of the people for whom the strategy has been devised, as well as other key stakeholders.
- Agreeing upon outcomes with different people, representatives and communities is not necessarily an easy or straightforward task; different groups have different priorities and interests.
- Collaborative ways of working can assist during the process of agreeing outcomes.
- Outcomes need to be clear, detailed and tangible.
- Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in all levels of an evaluation is one of the principles of ethical practice for professionals involved in evaluation.
- Involving service users in evaluations has benefits for both organisations and service users.
- When evaluating programs and services against desired outcomes, it is necessary to measure whether the strategy has achieved the outcomes within the relevant time frame; this requires analysing data.



# Learning Checkpoint 4

## Evaluate cultural safety strategies

### Part A

1. Suggest whose goals the outcomes of a strategy should reflect.

2. Briefly outline why it is important for outcomes to be specific.

3. Which of the following data collection methods are typically used to collect qualitative data? Tick all that apply.

- Interviews
- Thematic reviews
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Checklists



## Part B

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

### Case study

Sandro is a team leader at Rainbow Connections, an organisation that provides services and supports to young people aged 12–25 years who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Sandro and his team are working with the Rainbow Connections advisory group and a local Indigenous-led organisation to develop and evaluate a strategy for improving the cultural safety of the services that Rainbow Connections provides.

The strategies the group devised include:

- cultural awareness training for Rainbow Connections staff
- the development of a new code of conduct for Rainbow Connections that incorporates culturally safe work practices
- the establishment of a Rainbow Connections mentoring program involving young First Nations LGBTIQ+ people and LGBTIQ+ adults from the local Aboriginal community.

1. Identify at least two ways that Sandro can encourage collaboration when his team are working with the other stakeholders to agree the outcomes of the strategies.



- 2. Suggest two ways that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples could assist with the process of collecting data for the evaluation of the strategy.

- 3. Identify and describe a technique Sandro and his team could use to analyse the qualitative data they have collected.

The findings of the evaluation indicate that the mentoring program has been very effective at achieving the outcomes agreed by the group. However, Sandro still wants to meet with the group to discuss what revisions could be made to the mentoring program.

- 4. Explain why Sandro might want to discuss revisions to the mentoring program even though it seems to be very effective.



# Glossary

## Active listening

Concentrated listening and non-verbal encouragement indicating an understanding of what is being said.

## Assimilation

An ideology founded upon the idea that to enjoy the same standard of living as non-Indigenous people, Indigenous people needed to adopt European traditions and beliefs.

## Cultural awareness

Being aware of cultural difference and diversity and developing a sensitivity and respect for difference.

## Cultural competence

Having awareness, respect and understanding of the cultural diversity around you.

## Cultural factors

Shared characteristics of a group of people.

## Cultural identity

A person's self-perception of belonging to a social group, such as a particular nationality, religion, ethnicity or social class.

## Cultural lens

The unique perspective a person forms about the world based on their experiences.

## Cultural safety

An environment that is void of power imbalance and where shared respect, shared meaning and shared knowledge of others' experiences is promoted.

## Cultural sensitivity

Adopting a non-biased attitude and tolerating other cultural values, opinions, customs and needs.

## Discrimination

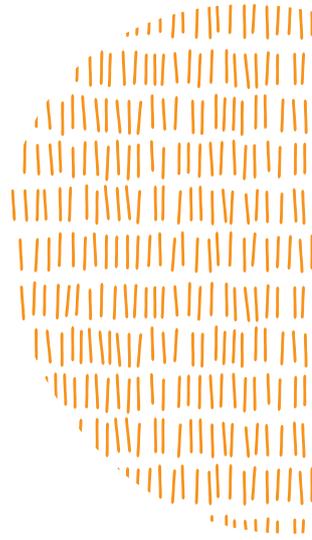
The act of excluding or treating a person differently based solely on an attribute such as disability, age, gender, race or sexual orientation.

## Elder

Someone who has gained recognition as a custodian of Country, law and spiritual wellbeing and who has permission to disclose knowledge and beliefs.

## Intergenerational trauma

Trauma that is passed on from one generation to the next.



**Kinship**

Systems that determine an individual's responsibilities towards other people, the land and natural resources.

**Lived experience**

A person's personal knowledge about their own situation gained through direct, firsthand experience, or through cultural or generational exposure to discrimination, trauma or other experiences.

**Outcomes**

Changes that occur due to an activity or program.

**Outputs**

The activities that are delivered to achieve an outcome.

**Prejudice**

An unjustified or incorrect attitude towards an individual based solely on the individual's membership of a social group.

**Racism**

Prejudice, discrimination or hatred towards someone because they are part of a racial or ethnic group, typically one that is marginalised.

**Self-determination**

A person's right to have control over their own life and make independent choices about decisions that affect them.

**Self-reflection**

The ability to observe and evaluate one's own thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

**Sorry Business**

A period of cultural practices and protocols relating to the funeral and bereavement of a deceased person. Protocols differ across different communities.

**Stereotyping**

Judging an individual based on particular characteristics, then applying that belief to all members of that group.

**Strengths-based approach**

Recognises that all individuals are resourceful and resilient experts in their lives, and can progress in a way that enhances their quality of life.

**Trauma**

The response to a distressing event or experience that can affect a person's ability to cope and function.

**Unconscious bias**

Subconsciously forming social stereotypes about certain people and expressing these.