CHCDIV003

Manage and promote diversity

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Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 1.1

Contents

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 *CHCDIV003 Manage and promote diversity*, 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.
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	• Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents • Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology • Interpreting key information in relevant documents • Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation
Writing	• Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents • Communicating through written letters, email and online • Recording progress; reporting incidents
Oral communication	• Clarifying instructions • Providing information • Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution • Using body language to model desired behaviour and responding to others' body language
Numeracy	• Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance • Interpreting measurements
Learning	• Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities • Managing your work and seeing how well you are going • Making goals for yourself at work • Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement
Problem-solving	• Identifying problems • Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes • Reviewing the outcome
Initiative and enterprise	• Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas • Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something • Making suggestions to improve work
Teamwork	• Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Planning and organising	• Planning your workload and commitments • Implementing tasks • Completing work on time • Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks
Self-management	• Understanding and applying decision-making processes • Reviewing your behaviour and the impact of your decisions
Technology	• Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely • Accessing, organising and presenting information • Using equipment correctly and safely

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 Research diversity in the workplace	1A Understand diversity	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1B Research diversity	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
Topic 2 Foster diversity	2A Demonstrate respect for diversity	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2B Plan work practices that respect diversity	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2C Promote the value of a diverse workforce	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 3 Adapt communication strategies	3A Communicate to diverse groups	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3B Tailor communication strategies for people with different needs	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3C Reflect on the use of communication strategies	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
Topic 4 Contribute to workplace diversity policies and procedures	4A Develop diversity strategies	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	4B Evaluate and report on outcomes	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident

Topic 1: Research diversity in the workplace

1A   Understand diversity

1B   Research diversity
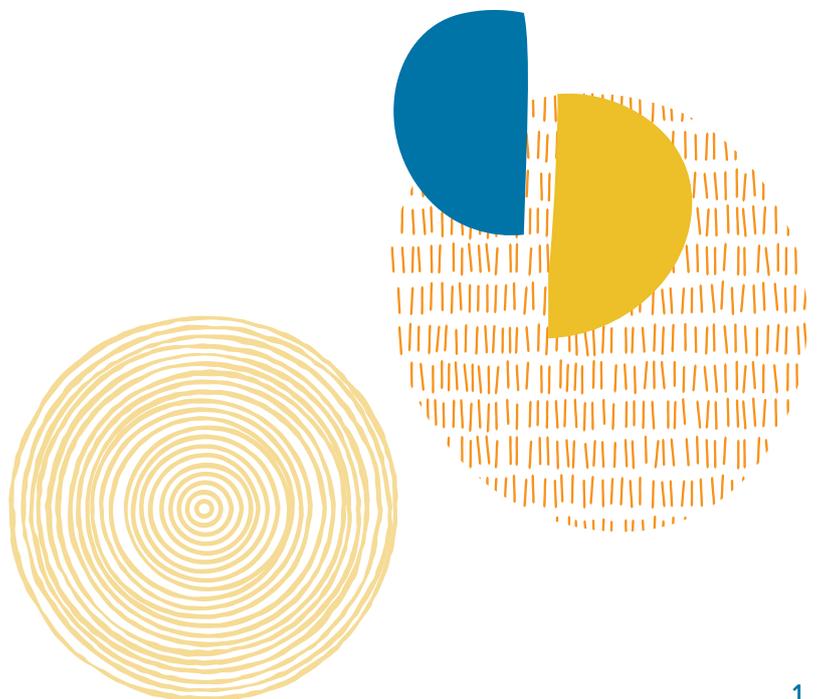
1A Understand diversity

People are different, are good at different things and have different backgrounds and life experiences. A workplace benefits from these kinds of difference and needs a wide variety of skills.

We all learn from each other, and mutual learning is all the greater when people have different experiences and skills. Interacting with a diverse range of people at work can positively challenge us to think differently about the world.

Diversity is about including all people and celebrating each person's unique differences. All community service workers must value people's different capacities and respect differences.

Concepts related to diversity

Diversity brings together different points of view, ways of doing things and methods of solving problems.

Key concepts and definitions related to diversity include **cultural competence**, **cultural awareness**, **cultural sensitivity** and **cultural safety**. There are overlaps between the definitions, though each one means something slightly different.

An organisation-wide approach to diversity leads to positive responses to diversity that are demonstrated in the behaviour and actions of staff. These responses are reflected in the support staff members provide.

There are several standards of practice that workplaces must adopt to reflect an acceptance and welcoming of diversity:

- To treat all people fairly and respectfully
- To take responsibility for creating an inclusive environment
- To be responsible for improving diversity and inclusion measures

The table below offers more detailed descriptions of some key terms related to diversity.

Cultural competence	Cultural competence is the ability to effectively communicate and interact with people of different cultures. Building cultural competence requires people to understand their own culture and what drives their beliefs and values. It means acknowledging the similarities and differences between your own culture and those of others and breaking down stereotypes and biases.

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

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

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

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

Cultural sensitivity or awareness	Cultural sensitivity involves being receptive to the different needs and values of people from other cultures. For example, a culturally sensitive approach means adapting to the values, opinions, customs and specific practices of others. Being sensitive is being aware of the cultural differences of others.
Cultural safety	A culturally safe environment is created when people show respect to others and demonstrate cultural awareness in their behaviour and actions. It means considering your own needs while making sure that they do not overshadow the needs of others. To create cultural safety, you must act in a way that shows others you care about their needs and are interested in their choices. This allows everyone to feel respected and included. When everyone feels welcomed in this way they feel empowered, valued, understood, supported, willing to participate, and open to the feelings and ideas of others.

Workplace culture

Human differences play an important part in determining the culture of a workplace.

Workplace culture and practices can be significantly determined by the diversity of people working there. Respect for diversity is essential if a team is to work cooperatively and share similar values, beliefs and attitudes towards the people they support.

When a new person joins a team it is unfair to expect them to give up their beliefs or values in order to fit in with a group of people. Some work practices are industry requirements or must be adhered to for compliance or safety. However, a person should be able to maintain their cultural identity and not have it absorbed by or lost within the dominant culture of the workplace. Valuing diversity means having support workers with a wide variety of cultural influences and recognising the value that different knowledge and experiences can bring to the team and programs.

Prejudice and stereotyping

A person from a particular group does not represent that entire group.

Unfortunately, prejudice and stereotyping commonly occur and are not helpful to teamwork or to maintaining a positive work culture.

Prejudice	Prejudice is an opinion or attitude that is based on a preconceived idea, rather than an experience or fact. It means *pre-judging*. Being prejudiced is believing something about a situation or person before knowing enough to make an appropriate judgment. Prejudice is unfair and inappropriate.

Stereotyping	Stereotyping is the process of unfairly or incorrectly making assumptions or generalisations about all of the people in a certain group. Examples of stereotyping include saying or believing that, 'all women want to have children' or 'men do not do any housework'.

Prejudice and stereotyping can be found in a workplace in relation to a number of aspects of diversity such as:

- gender
- sexual orientation
- age
- ethnicity

- personality type
- visual appearance or physical features
- dress standards
- personal interests or differences.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the unjust or negative treatment of someone based on a personal characteristic.

Discriminatory behaviour might be on the grounds of the person's race, age or gender, or any other key area of diversity. It may be demonstrated as harassment, victimisation or bullying.

It is illegal to discriminate against others. Discrimination can result in legal prosecution and behaviour that discriminates is outlined in various pieces of legislation such as:

Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)

Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

Discrimination also occurs when rules or conditions that apply to everyone have an unfair effect on some people because of their different circumstances. This applies to staff, as well as the relationships community service workers have with the people they support.

In a workplace, seemingly harmless joking based on a person's race, sex, religion, sexual orientation or appearance is a form of discrimination. These types of jokes hinder rather than promote understanding because they can be demeaning to the people concerned. The victim of the jokes is being singled out and treated less fairly than other people. Most humour of this sort, including mimicry of a person, is based on prejudicial and discriminatory stereotypes. Such humour can be extremely hurtful and is unacceptable both inside and outside of the workplace.

Discrimination in the workplace can occur in direct and indirect ways.

Direct discrimination
Direct discrimination occurs when a person with a particular attribute is treated less favourably than another person without the attribute in the same or similar circumstances. For example, an employee is not offered a promotion to a supervisor role because she is Asian and the employer believes that this would make her unpopular with the non-Asian clients who use the service.

Indirect discrimination
Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition, requirement or practice is imposed and a person with an attribute does not or is not able to comply. An example would be if a workplace planned a social outing that required people to compete in a running race. That would discriminate against staff members who are unable to run.

Video: Ageism

The Australian Human Rights Commission have put together a new Ageism Report, called 'What's age got to do with it?' You can watch Dr Kay Patterson AO explain further here: aspirelr.link/yt-ageism-report

Racism

Racial vilification refers to behaviour that insults individuals and groups on the grounds of their colour, race, ethnicity or national origins. This includes racist jokes and racially offensive terms, stereotyping, provocative media reporting, historical revisionism and racist hate propaganda. Most countries have legislation prohibiting racism.

> Racism is the belief that some people are superior/inferior to others based on their race.

For example, in an aged care home, racism can prevent older people from feeling worthy or welcome. In addition, if it is known that a service provider has racist attitudes towards staff or the people they support, the reputation of the business will suffer.

Disability

In your workplace, you and your work colleagues will all have different physical characteristics and abilities. Some people will be better suited to some tasks than others. In some cases, physical characteristics may impair or compromise the abilities of the person, which may be referred to as a disability.

According to Australian law, disability includes:

- physical – which affects a person's mobility or dexterity

- intellectual – which affects a person's ability to learn, think, process and organise

- psychiatric – which affects a person's mental health

- sensory – which affects a person's senses such as sight, hearing, touch

- neurological – which results in the loss of some bodily or mental functions

- learning disability – which affects people's comprehensions and processing of information.

About 20 per cent of the Australian population is disabled in some way. There are many different types of disability, with varying degrees of severity. A disability can result from an accident, a genetic disorder, infection, birth or a psychiatric condition.

There may also be disabilities resulting from physical disfigurement or from the presence of organisms causing disease in the body.

Worries and preconceived notions about persons with a disability may lead to discriminatory practices for the reasons described below.

Stigma	There can be a lot of stigma surrounding disabilities, and employers sometimes avoid hiring people with disabilities because they are uncomfortable talking about the person's needs and feel embarrassed and awkward.
Misconceptions	A misconception is a view or opinion that is based on untrue information. People can equate disability with lack of ability generally, worry about how people with a disability will fit into the existing team, or be concerned about the expense of accommodating employees who are disabled.
Dealing with change	Existing employees may be nervous about, and resistant to, making changes to accommodate people with disabilities.

Disability-friendly workplace

If a person with a disability is employed by an organisation, the employer may need to make changes to the workplace so that the employee can best perform their job. Employers are not required to make workplace changes if it would cause major difficulties or incur unreasonable costs. This is called 'unjustifiable hardship'. In this instance, employers need to show how making changes would cause such hardship.

Your organisation may implement policies and procedures that make the workplace more accessible for people with a disability. Making the workplace accessible means taking steps to ensure that all people can participate fully in the workplace, regardless of whether they have a disability or not.

Organisations that have addressed accessibility may have looked at a number of workplace features and situations, such as those shown here.

Physical access	Physical access, including the layout of a building; fittings such as doorways, stairs, furniture, and kitchen facilities; appropriate lighting and signage.

Communication	Communication, including use of appropriate formats, use of interpreters and other spokespeople; provision of supportive communication devices.
Training and accountability	Training and accountability, including ensuring that everyone within the organisation is aware of the organisation's policies and procedures regarding disability and diversity.
Assistive technology	Assistive technology, such as speech recognition programs, screen readers, touch screens, keyboard and mouse alternatives.

You can read more about learning to make workplaces disability friendly from the ABC here: aspirelr.link/disability-friendly-workplace

Characteristics of diversity and cultural identity

Cultural identity is about how we understand who we are and where we come from, why we are the way we are and what we believe in. People with a strong cultural identity are more likely to show confidence in themselves and to feel a sense of belonging. They are also better able to understand diversity and work positively with others.

Here are examples of factors that may influence a person's cultural identity.

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

Beliefs and customs	Every person has their own beliefs and customs which reflect their values. These values are often associated with race or ethnicity, religion, political association or other cultural aspect. Some people believe leisure time is the most important thing in their life; some value education; whereas others place a high value on money, wealth and material possessions.
Race, culture and ethnicity	Race is a term applied to people based on their genetic heritage. An ethnic group is a distinct group with specific characteristics. People of the same ethnicity have a shared past or culture and might share the same or similar: • physical characteristics (such as eye shape or facial characteristics) • linguistic characteristics (language or dialect spoken) • behavioural or cultural characteristics (religion or customs) • environmental characteristics (living in the same area). Australia is home to people from many races and ethnicities. People are also influenced by their life experiences in Australia and have different beliefs and styles of living.

Language	Many languages are spoken in Australia – both verbal and non-verbal. Many people are able to speak more than one language. Some people communicate using sign language. People may also demonstrate particular communication styles and non-verbal social customs, such as bowing. Each language should be respected as a valid form of communication.
Religion and spiritual beliefs	• All Australians are free to practise any religion they find appropriate to their beliefs, faith and values, and have the right to express those religious beliefs or to practise no religion at all. • Religion is a specific set of organised beliefs and practices, focused on the belief in and worship of one or more gods. Religion is usually practised by a community or a group. • Spirituality is a broader concept than religion. It is more of an individual practice and has to do with having a sense of peace and purpose. People can have a range of spiritual beliefs without necessarily being religious. • Religion and spirituality often have a strong influence on the norms, beliefs, values and customs that determine family culture. Many individuals and communities frame their values in religious or spiritual terms. • It is not appropriate to ask a person you support about their religious beliefs and customs habits unless it affects the way you provide support.
Life experiences, personal history and experiences of trauma	All people are affected by their life experiences. Whether traumatic or positive, experiences affect the way people live their lives and interact with others. In some cases, life experiences are visible, such as a scar. Other life experiences are not obvious, such as a chronic illness, a traumatic experience of war, the death of a loved one, a serious accident, or inter-generational trauma.
Family history	Ancestry or family history may influence a person's way of being that is evident in their behaviour. For example, you may discover that your ancestors have lived through tragedies or triumphed against the odds. You may discover that your own attitudes and beliefs are linked with this history. Added to this is your own set of life experiences. Who you are today and the values and beliefs you hold have been shaped by these experiences, as well as by your family and your environment.

Families granted political asylum or refugee status	People who have been granted political asylum have been in danger in their home country due to their race, nationality, religion, political opinions or social group. They have come to Australia and been recognised by the government as needing protection.
	Refugees are people who have left their own country to escape war, persecution or natural disaster. They may not have chosen or wanted to leave their own country.
	When gathering background information about people who have been granted political asylum or refugee status, questions about cultural background or family history may be confronting.
	They may experience developmental or emotional challenges due to the trauma or uncertainty they have experienced. They may be confused about their identity and where they belong.
Family type	Families are structured in many different ways. They might be:
	• nuclear families – two parents raising children (may be male/female parents or same-sex parents)
	• single-parent families – one parent raising children
	• extended families – two or more adults raising children in one home
	• step or blended families – two separate families merged into one
	• grandparent families – a grandparent or grandparents raising children.
Gender, gender identification, relationships and sexual orientation	People identify with different gender identities and sexual orientations. These characteristics or orientations are based on the person's identity, and include identifying as:
	• male or female
	• heterosexual (being attracted to people of the opposite gender)
	• homosexual (being attracted to people of the same gender)
	• bisexual (being attracted to one's own and the opposite gender)
	• transgender or trans (people whose identity does not correspond with the sex assigned at birth)
	• non-binary, gender diverse, gender fluid (people may identify as an intermediate, or third gender, identify with more than one gender or no gender, or have a fluctuating gender identity).
	The term 'LGBTQ+' describes a range of sexual orientations including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and those questioning their sexual orientation. The '+' shows inclusiveness.

(cont.) **Gender, gender identification, relationships and sexual orientation**	Intersex status refers to people who have physical, hormonal or genetic features that are: • neither wholly female nor wholly male • a combination of female and male • neither female nor male. Being intersex is about having biological variations, not about gender identity. An intersex person may have the biological attributes of both sexes, or lack some of the biological attributes considered necessary to be defined as one sex or the other. Discrimination against people on the basis of their sexuality or sexual orientation is illegal in Australia. Being intersex must be considered as another aspect of the person – just like race, culture and ethnicity.
Age and generation	Research shows that each generation approaches life and work in a different way. Their unique attitudes, ambitions and world views have been shaped by the social and historical events that they have lived through: • Silent generation (born approx. 1925–1945) • Baby boomers (born approx. 1946–1964) • Generation X (born approx. 1965–1979) • Generation Y or Millennials (born approx. 1980–1994) • Generation Z (born approx. 1995 to 2010) • Generation Alpha (born since 2011)

Example
Encouraging cultural diversity

Bernice works as a disability support worker, and mainly works in clients' homes. Today she is supporting Merindah and her child, Kirra, who has a physical disability. They are recent arrivals in Australia. Merindah asks Bernice if she should stop speaking to her child in her own language so Kirra will learn English without being confused.

Bernice explains that being bilingual or multilingual is of benefit to Kirra and will contribute to her success. She encourages Merindah to continue to support her child to use and develop her first language. Bernice points out that Kirra's linguistic diversity will help her become confident in the use of language. She shows Merindah a program for children that aims to expose them to different languages and dialects, and encourages appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Merindah is relieved that encouraging Kirra to speak her first language would add to Kirra's positive sense of identity and wellbeing. Speaking in their first language is important to the family as it demonstrates a connection with family values and cultural heritage and traditions.

Australian culture

Australian culture is made up of the cultures of First Nations peoples, Anglo-Celtic culture (due to Australia's history of British settlement) and a diverse mix of cultures from all over the world.

There is evidence that many non-First Nations Australian children and adults have limited knowledge and misconceptions about First Nations communities and culture. Stereotypical views about First Nations peoples are common. These are generally inaccurate and outdated. For example, some people believe that the majority of First Nations people live traditional lifestyles in remote parts of the country. However, while this is the case for some, many if not most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in urban and rural parts of Australia and have diverse lifestyles.

Cultural diversity in Australia has continued to grow since the post-World-War-II period of migration, as more people born overseas migrate to Australia. Some people immigrate because they believe they can make better lives for themselves, while others are trying to escape war-torn countries, or political and social persecution. Immigrants come from a wide range of social, technological, industrial, political and economic backgrounds and a unique multicultural landscape has developed in Australia.

Example
Celebrating religious events

Practising respect for diversity includes choosing experiences that are authentic and relevant to the community, and the clients who use the service. In addition to embedding culturally appropriate practices throughout the program in different ways, a disability service provider in Melbourne celebrates important cultural events in the community and gives information to all clients about their meaning.

The organisation holds a celebration at the end of the Muslim month of Ramadan, as many of the clients are Muslim. All the clients' families join in, and those from other religions and cultures learn about what Ramadan means to the Muslim families.

The service also celebrates the Hindu festival of Diwali, the Chinese Moon Lantern Festival and Easter. The staff always consult with clients before deciding what to celebrate and how to celebrate these special events.

Practice Task 1

Question 1

Which of the following statements about diversity are correct? Tick all that apply.

❑ People should be asked about their religious faith during induction to the service.

❑ It is illegal to ask a person for information about their sexual orientation.

❑ Diversity is appreciating and respecting the practices, values and beliefs of clients.

❑ Cultural sensitivity is being receptive to the different needs and values of various cultures.

❑ Everyone should think the same way and adopt the dominant culture while at work.

Question 2

Match each term with its description.

Stereotyping	An opinion or attitude that is based on a preconceived idea, rather than experience or fact
Prejudice	When a person is treated less fairly than another person because of differences outside of their control
Discrimination	A category that refers to physical characteristics and is usually dependent on someone's genetic makeup
Race	The process of unfairly or incorrectly making generalisations about all the people within a certain group

Question 3

Briefly explain the differences between direct and indirect discrimination.

Question 4

Which of the following are examples of cultural identity and diversity? Tick all that apply.

☐ People who identify as nonbinary or gender fluid and don't identify as being either male or female.

☐ Different generations having different approaches to life that are shaped by when they grew up.

☐ Intersex people like to be described as male.

☐ A transgender person feeling their personality does not correspond with their birth sex.

☐ People framing their values in religious or spiritual terms.

Question 5

Briefly describe one category of disability.

1B Research diversity

Understanding differences will improve communication, tolerance and acceptance of other people at work.

It is worth investing time and energy into learning how to accommodate and adapt to different people and different practices. This can improve workplace relationships that may, in turn, lead to better understanding of the contributions each person can make in terms of their individual talents and skills.

By celebrating and making use of people's diverse skills and lived experience, their different qualities, skills and knowledge can be harnessed to accomplish goals and provide a positive workplace.

Benefits of a diverse workplace
• Promotes diversity and welcomes others, attracting staff to the workplace
• Encourages open communication, innovative approaches and new ideas for programs and practices
• Improves social justice and equal opportunities for all
• Ensures staff are given the opportunities to share a variety of ideas, skills, knowledge and talents
• Shows that life experiences, values and perspectives are represented and acknowledged
• Offers a workplace where people feel welcome and supported
• Improves communication between people when required to meet the needs of a diverse community
• Demonstrates tolerance and models these values to others

Diversity objectives

Objectives are the goals or aspirations that an organisation works towards. They are statements that form part of the organisation's vision, mission or philosophy statements and are embedded across various policy documents. Your workplace may have a specific diversity or inclusion policy that has explicit objectives regarding how diversity is to be demonstrated in the workplace. This policy may go by different names, such as the equal opportunity policy or the diversity policy. It outlines the expectations of staff to encourage and support diversity across all aspects of the business.

Examples of diversity objectives might include:

• improved workplace relationships

• an improved understanding of the contributions each person can make in terms of their individual talents and skills

- a harmonious and accepting workplace where all staff and clients feel supported and welcome

- creating, maintaining and encouraging a culture that accepts, respects and promotes differences and values diversity in the workplace

- improving communication skills of staff to meet the needs of diverse clients.

Diversity objectives may also specify that the organisation will:

- value diversity by maintaining a safe and secure work environment and act against inappropriate workplace behaviour, including discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation

- recruit staff impartially from a diverse field of suitably qualified candidates

- provide learning opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge, skills and experience

- embrace the range of cultural perspectives displayed in multicultural Australia and address the key issues affecting workplace communication

- build an understanding of the benefits of encouraging and valuing diversity in the workplace

- treat every person fairly and equally regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, culture/ethnicity, language, religious beliefs, abilities or disabilities.

Here is a list of workplace strategies that demonstrate diversity in action.

Recruitment	Ensure recruitment practices do not present barriers to diversity. This means regularly reviewing recruitment protocols.
Promotion and marketing	Ensure advertising does not draw on stereotypes or generalisations in the language and images used.
Encouraging an inclusive work culture	Ensure the attitudes are practised at all levels to foster a diversity culture. Share information, celebrations and acknowledge differences between people to foster understanding and respect.

Using data to measure diversity objectives

How do you determine if an objective is being met? Data can be collected and used to measure and monitor the effectiveness of objectives. Some examples are listed below:

- If the objective is to improve communication between the service and the diverse range of clients it supports, there needs to be a way to measure improvements in communication. The service may collect data from clients, staff and other stakeholders to determine their level of satisfaction and identify work that still needs to be done.

- If a service has a key objective to encourage inclusion, then staff may be required to complete diversity training at least once a year. Data could be collected on the numbers of staff who have undergone the training and how often it is run. To identify if the training is effective in changing attitudes and behaviour in work practices then a different type of data, such as a staff survey, needs to be collected.

- If an objective is to represent a range of cultural perspectives from the local community in programs, the service will need to know the range of diversity represented amongst the staff, clients and local community that it provides services for. This may require looking at statistics from enrolments, employment records and local area demographics (population data).

- If data needs to be accessed from staff employment records, from client information or from opinions in a survey, permission will need to be sought. It is reasonable that some staff or clients may refuse to share this personal information or participate. To be able to give permission to participate, clients and staff need to be provided with the purpose or reason for the research. This needs to be clearly stated and described, as does how the information will be used to the benefit of the service or implemented to enhance the experience for all clients.

- When determining the size and scope of research, consider keeping the collection of data manageable in terms of its size (i.e., number of people), but also in the expectations you have for people, such as the number of questions. Having a valid sample means having enough people participating to be able to draw conclusions that are meaningful and useful. Consider whether your findings apply to the service as a whole or to just a few staff or clients?

- Depending on the way the results are presented, information can be de-identified, or presented anonymously. For example, some participants may be prepared to participate in an interview, but not wish to be identified. All community service organisations (like all organisations) must comply with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)*, which covers the collection of personal information from others, including information about clients.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data refers to quantities or amounts and is represented in numbers.

Quantitative data responds to questions such as how much, how many and how often. For example, the number of people employed in the organisation that are aged between 30 and 40 would be a piece of quantitative data. When you are dealing with quantitative data, the results are numbers, quantities or values. They can be collated from information already held by the organisation or researched externally. For instance, a workplace could access data from employee records with regards to gender, age, or location of employees or clients that use the service.

If you wish to explore different ways of collecting and analysing data, you can use the following tips to source data and research:

- Use reputable websites such as Australian and state government sources. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

- University libraries can provide access to information that has undergone rigorous academic validation processes.

- Not-for-profit community service organisations also provide valuable data that is backed by research and evidence.

- Be critical of where you source your data. Wikipedia is not considered to be a reliable source of information because it is written by members of the public who may or may not be using authoritative information.

Ways to collect quantitative data
• Surveys with closed questions, including paper-based, mobile, email and internet surveys such as Survey Monkey
• Data downloaded from information databases
• Interviews via the telephone or face-to-face that use closed questions
• Observation of a person at work with a set number of items that you look for to be demonstrated

Qualitative data

Qualitative data refers to information collected on attitudes, opinions and thoughts. This data can provide information on the way people feel, their attitudes to topics and why they behave in the way they do.

Qualitative data is not countable or measurable. Examples of qualitative data includes asking people to rate a service as 'poor', 'adequate' or 'excellent'. It is often gathered using open-ended questions that require a more detailed response; for example, 'What information would you find useful?'. A closed question is one that requires a 'yes' or 'no' response, such as, 'Would you be interested in a behaviour guidance workshop?'.

Qualitative data collection is subjective because it is based on people's opinions. Motivations and underlying beliefs and attitudes can be uncovered using this type of questioning.

Participants can be asked direct questions in a focus group (group discussions) or in face-to-face interviews.

> Qualitative data is descriptive and ideas-based. It is represented in words.

Analysing diversity data

The information collected from research can be used to identify ways to improve things. The findings can be reported and used to determine to what extent the organisation is meeting its diversity objectives.

Analysis will usually require some interpretation of results. Present the information collected in a logical and clear manner. Quantitative data is best represented in tables, graphs or pie charts. Begin with a description of what you found, highlight areas that need to be addressed, and include any recommendations. This will provide valuable information so your workplace can target areas that may need development.

For example, qualitative data may be collected in the form of a staff survey that captures the opinions of staff on the gap between policies and procedures and actual practices that occur during staff interactions with clients. The results may show that there is little alignment with the diversity objectives outlined in its diversity policy.

Example
Diversity as a strategic priority

Madeleine is the director of a disability support organisation and has made diversity a strategic priority. The overall strategy is to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce that will better reflect the diverse population where the organisation is located. Madeleine has been collecting workforce data to gather information on the diversity of staff. She wants to use this information to help design and pilot some initiatives such as advertising for new support workers and other staff and to update employment contracts and policies.

The data will also be used to target specific training and professional development activities for staff on diversity issues. Madeleine aims to create a more inclusive work environment, enhancing communication and building relationships between all staff and the clients they interact with.

Practice Task 2

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

Case study 1

A homelessness organisation prides itself on its equal opportunity policy and procedure. The owner is aware of a significant gender imbalance in the industry, with very few men being employed as support workers. The organisation has a policy of equal opportunity, but also has a diversity plan that states by the beginning of 2024 they expect 30 per cent of their employees to be male. At the end of 2022, they collected data.

The following quantitative data was obtained:

- Five out of six (83 per cent) of leadership positions were filled by a woman.

- 12 per cent of employees were male.

The following qualitative data was obtained:

- All staff thought that more women were employed as in the organisation because women have a more caring nature.

- The men in the organisation felt that they didn't have many opportunities for promotion as only women were employed in higher positions.

Question 1

Give two examples of how the organisation could have collected quantitative data about the workforce.

Question 2

What is qualitative data? Give an example from the case study of the type of information it provides.

Question 3

Why did the organisation summarise its findings? What might be the next steps for the organisation based on the data it has analysed?

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

Case study 2

Shine Bright Community Services encourages diversity in the workplace. The manager, Mitchell, has a very specific agenda to promote diversity among staff and also encourages strategies that involve the clients and broader community to be actively engaged in programs and activities that promote diversity.

To ensure these practices are being implemented, Mitchell develops a staff and service users survey. He has arranged for an outside organisation to conduct the survey to gather quantitative data and contact staff via the phone for anonymised interviews to collect qualitative information.

The survey from staff identifies the following information:

Gender		Ethnicity		Age		Disability		First language	
Male	8	Greek	1	20–24	13	Physical	1	English	15
Female	21	Vietnamese	5	25–34	8	Intellectual	0	Mandarin	5
		Anglo-Celtic Australian	12	35–44	6	Sensory	1	Italian	1
		Chinese	5	45–54	2	Cognitive	0	Greek	0
		Italian	1	55–59	0	Neurological	0	Vietnamese	5
		Brazilian	2	60–64	0			Portuguese	2
		Thai	3	65 and over	0			Thai	1

The interviews identify the following information:

The majority of staff responded positively to the promotion of diversity in the workplace. Most people felt that everyone got along pretty well and there were few tensions amongst staff. If there were any disagreements, they seemed to be dealt with in a way that respected both parties and did not leave any tensions to be dealt with later.

All staff enjoy the monthly cultural celebration where someone brings in a different dish from their country to share with the rest of the staff.

Question 4

Summarise two conclusions made about the inclusiveness of this workplace from the results.

Question 5

Give an example from the quantitative data that indicates a diverse workforce.

Question 6

Provide one example of the benefits the owner may see in promoting and encouraging diversity in the organisation.

Question 7

Give two examples of a strategy the owner might use to promote greater diversity among his workforce.

Summary

- Diversity can challenge people's assumptions and make them think differently about the world.

- Diversity is described as appreciating and respecting the practices, values and beliefs of all clients and colleagues.

- Valuing diversity can mean employing diverse community service workers because they have different experiences and ways of looking at things.

- There are many factors influencing cultural identity such as religion, sexual orientation and identity, disability and gender.

- Organisations may have a specific diversity or inclusion policy that outlines explicit objectives for nurturing and encouraging diversity in all aspects of the workplace.

- There needs to be a match between the objectives of the organisation in the promotion of diversity and the practices that occur in the workplace.

- When researching workplace diversity, you need to determine how you can use the information to better understand the workforce and make better decisions for the organisation.

Learning Checkpoint 1

Research diversity in the workplace

Part A

1. A support worker is discussing a family of clients from Mali and you notice that she has some prejudiced and stereotypical views. Which of the following statements would suggest that she has prejudicial or stereotypical opinions? Select all that apply.

   ❑ She has formed an opinion about the family based on a preconceived idea, rather than experience or fact.

   ❑ She has made a judgment based on past experience and without knowing enough about this family or their situation.

   ❑ She admits she doesn't know much about people from Africa and wants to find out more.

   ❑ The support worker has made assumptions about all people from Africa.

2. Provide three examples of the potential benefits to an organisation of a diverse workplace.

3. Give two examples of how diversity practices can positively affect the experiences and relationships of staff.

4. Explain the difference between quantitative and qualitative data. Give an example in relation to diversity.

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

a. Diversity is about the inclusion of people who are different.	Yes / No
b. Culture is the social behaviour, lifestyle and characteristics that describe a group of people.	Yes / No
c. Race refers to the characteristics of a group of people with a shared past and culture.	Yes / No
d. Ethnicity refers to physical characteristics and is usually dependent on a person's genetic makeup.	Yes / No
e. Discrimination is when a person is treated less fairly than another person because of differences outside their control.	Yes / No

6. Match each area of diversity to its meaning or description.

Transgender	Characteristics that may impair, limit or compromise a person's movements, senses or activities.
Sexual orientation	Systems of faith and worship such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Paganism, Shinto and Sikhism.
Religion	People whose identity does not correspond with the gender they were assigned at birth.
Disability	The set of unique attitudes, ambitions and world views that develop from social and historical events that occur throughout a person's life.
Generational attributes	Who a person is attracted to. Often described using the term LGBTQ+ or heterosexual.

Part B

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

Case study

Abdul is Muslim and works as a peer support worker at a mental health service. The service he works for has a policy that indicates the workplace will be respectful of people's religious beliefs, but it has no place for him to pray during the day. He asks the owner if some space can be made available to him during prayer times. The owner tells him that no one should be given special treatment. He emphasises that every employee must be treated equally, and he must make do with the areas already allocated to staff, such as the staff room and the meeting rooms.
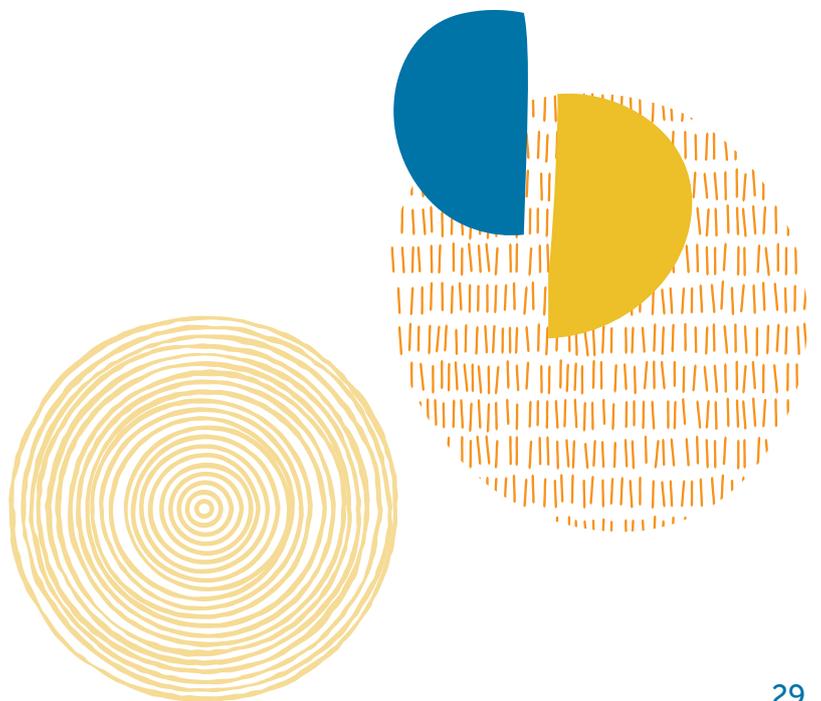
1. Identify two ways in which Abdul's employer is failing to respect his religious diversity.

2. Provide two suggestions you could make to Abdul to encourage his employer to meet his needs for a prayer space.

Topic 2: Foster diversity

2A Demonstrate respect for diversity

2B Plan work practices that respect diversity

2C Promote the value of a diverse workforce

2A Demonstrate respect for diversity

You can be a positive role model for others by respecting and celebrating diversity.

An effective leader is able to recognise and understand the characteristics that make people different from each other, and knows how to harness and accommodate these differences. This begins with developing cultural awareness, which is a kind of grounded knowledge, awareness and acceptance of other cultures and other people's cultural identities. It will increase as you interact with people from different social and cultural backgrounds from your own.

Once you learn to recognise the perceptions and attitudes you have towards others, you will recognise that everyone sees, interprets and evaluates things differently. Misunderstandings and conflict often arise as a result of one person applying their view of the world on others.

Everyone needs to cooperate, respond positively to differences and respect the rights of all people to ensure that the organisation performs successfully.

You will interact with many groups in community services and everyone you deal with will be different from you in some way. Some of these differences may not concern you at all, while for others you may need to adjust your work practices or your usual way of thinking. Similarly, other people may need to adjust to accommodate your differences.

Cultural competence

Having cultural competence involves much more than awareness of cultural differences. It is the ability to understand, effectively communicate with and harmoniously interact with people across different cultures.

Cultural competence encompasses:

- being aware of one's own biases, values and assumptions and being able to put these aside and work with care, respect and professionalism in all situations

- developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences

- learning about different cultural practices and world views

- developing skills for communicating and interacting sensitively and appropriately across cultures.

At an organisational level
At an organisational level, cultural competence should be: • embedded in the philosophy, mission statement, policies and objectives • demonstrated by leaders in their communications and interactions with staff and stakeholders, including clients • promoted through various programs and celebrations for clients and staff • supported by resources including professional development activities available to all staff. A culturally competent organisation is likely to have: • a strong understanding of the cultural profile of the local community • a set of objectives to promote diversity that are monitored and promoted • staff who seek information on specific cultural behaviours or understandings • people in charge who actively promote the benefits of cultural competence • access to essential services, such as interpreters and translators, if required • a system of reward or recognition for initiatives that are culturally competent.

At an individual level
At an individual level, cultural competence involves becoming culturally aware. It is the ability to: • identify and challenge one's own assumptions, values and beliefs • develop empathy for other people and cultures • see the world from different points of view. A culturally competent individual is likely to: • have a strong knowledge of how one's own culture shapes attitudes, perceptions and behaviours • have a willingness to learn about other people's cultures • acquire specific knowledge of the language, customs and values of particular cultures • have the skills to feel comfortable and communicate effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds • be unwilling to stereotype individuals from different cultures or ethnicities.

Find out more about cultural competence by visiting the Centre for Cultural Competence Australia's website: aspirelr.link/ccca

Role model best practice

A culturally safe workplace is an environment where everyone feels safe to express their identity and say what they need and who they are without fear of being challenged or having that request denied.

All organisations should aspire to establish a culturally safe workplace.

Cultural safety describes an environment where there is no power imbalance or discrimination. It is accepting of all people and shared respect, shared meaning and shared knowledge of others' experience is promoted.

In a culturally safe workplace:
• everyone is treated with dignity and respect
• different cultures, languages, experiences, customs and obligations are identified and respected
• individual differences are acknowledged and celebrated
• pathways are provided to empowerment and self-determination, such as employees being involved in decisions that affect their work role
• people feel comfortable discussing, promoting, and maintaining their distinctive customs, traditions, procedures and practices.

For a workplace to work effectively, staff need to see themselves as being part of a team working towards shared goals. Each person should be encouraged to use and share their unique qualities, skills or backgrounds in ways that will enhance the team. Trust is essential. When people feel culturally safe they feel valued and are more likely to share their experiences and display their cultural identity.

Leaders and supervisors can model the practices and behaviours they want to encourage. Modelling is demonstrating through your behaviour the way you wish others to act. When people see someone they trust and respect behave in a certain way, they feel encouraged to act similarly. When leaders and supervisors respond effectively and sensitively to issues in day-to-day work interactions, they are modelling their respect for diversity.

Through modelling, you can show others how to:

- empathise

- show affection

- help and share with others

- respect others' opinions and needs

- observe cultural customs.

Modelling diversity might include:

- arranging for collaboration sessions to share ideas and encouraging participation from every team member

- using opportunities to promote the advantages of diversity such as during staff meetings and team building events

- celebrating everyone's contributions through newsletters and notices

- focusing on positive outcomes and strengths of individuals and teams

- asking others to mentor, teach a skill or share knowledge in which they are proficient

- calling out stereotyping or prejudice and refusing to tolerate discrimination.

Encouraging inclusivity

When stereotyping and prejudice go unchallenged, people are less likely to see the qualities and attributes of each team member. It can lead to people feeling alienated, unwelcome and outside of the team. Staff can stop fully expressing themselves if they feel that differences are not tolerated, and that everyone is expected to conform to the norm.

Finding themes of commonality between people can counter prejudice and be used to recognise links that already exist such as a personal shared area of interest or professional development topic. One link that brings a team together is a common work objective. A shared purpose can help bring people together and build an inclusive environment and a place of cultural safety. For example, organising recreational and social activities allows clients with similar values, experiences and interests to feel a sense of value and belonging. Showcase events that encourage staff to share an activity, such as a morning tea to celebrate a culturally important event.

Leaders can encourage collaboration as a way of sharing their experiences and working together as a team.

Tips to encourage collaboration and cooperation
• Approach people in a way that respects their work style.
• Listen to different opinions and don't judge others based on what you perceive their work style to be.
• Give criticism sensitively and receive criticism open-mindedly.
• Work together to solve problems, such as differences in values, opinions and beliefs.
• Ask yourself what others need to be able to work effectively.
• Be open to new ideas and to learning new ways of doing things.
• Discuss tensions before they escalate.
• Use the talents of others to help you carry out your own work more effectively.
• Know the difference between personal and professional opposition.
• Recognise the talents of others and acknowledge their contribution.

You can learn more about cultural safety at SafeWork Australia's website here: aspirelr.link/what-is-cultural-safety

Coaching and mentoring

Many workplaces recognise the benefit of more experienced staff assisting less experienced colleagues to practise their skills in a supportive environment. In some organisations a coach or mentor from outside the organisation will be used.

Coaching and **mentoring** can reinforce positive work practices through encouragement and reward. This arrangement can promote and encourage the use of diversity practices in an organisation or as a way of improving the cultural awareness of an employee.

Coaching
The training and guidance provided by an experienced person to help a learner achieve their goals.

Mentoring
The sharing of knowledge and skills by an experienced person with a less-experienced person.

Selecting the right person for the role of coach or mentor involves planning and the input of several people. The person being coached needs to be able to see the advantages of the relationship and how it will be of benefit to them. For example, the employee may discuss setting a particular goal that they would like to achieve, such as improving their communication skills. The ground rules of the arrangement, such as the duration of the relationship and the frequency of meetings or check-ins, need to be established. This relationship is targeted at the employee being coached/mentored but their coach/mentor also benefits from the recognition and validation of their skills as a result of stepping into the role.

Coaching provides continuous feedback. The coach or mentor can pick up on attitudes, feelings and behaviours they observe or hear and can provide insights.

The differences between coaching and mentoring are described here.

Coaching
Coaching is generally a one-to-one relationship, but can also be used in a team context, such as a team of support workers who work together. A coach is likely to be in a more senior role than the person or people they are coaching, with more experience and/or higher qualifications.
The focus is to engage with the people under their supervision, observe them when they are working and provide feedback. Often the people being coached want to achieve a goal, which may relate to diversity or inclusivity.

Mentoring
Mentoring is where a staff member is paired with a colleague with significant experience, skills, knowledge and desired attributes in a specific area or across a broad professional domain. This person takes the role of an advisor or role model who works closely with the staff member over an extended period of time.

Example
Becoming culturally aware

Rohini has just started a new job in a residential aged care home in a culturally diverse suburb. Although she is aware of her own cultural background, she has had little interaction with the cultures of the other staff and residents using the service. To improve her cultural awareness, she asks her supervisor, Alain, for advice. Alain provides her with some ideas for resources, and suggests she shadows another support worker during her first week.

One of the more experienced staff members, Betty, happily agrees to be a coach for Rohini. Rohini works alongside Betty and, during her first week, Rohini asks questions about the operations of the home and discusses situations that may arise and how to deal with them effectively.

Rohini reflects on her experiences. She makes a mental list of the things she has learnt from Betty and how she benefitted by working alongside a support worker with so much confidence and knowledge. Rohini thinks about:

- the experience and skills Betty brings to her job

- Betty's willingness to share her knowledge

- how much she gained in confidence and ideas by listening to Betty and observing her do her job.

Professional development opportunities

Training is one way to encourage staff to embrace diversity in the workplace.

Training needs can be identified through observation, discussion, interviews, performance appraisals and surveys. Training can also become necessary as a result of complaints, incidents and issues.

There are several traits and behaviours that you would expect to observe in staff who are culturally competent. This includes an understanding of the benefits of having a diverse staff working in a diverse community. It also involves the skills of being able to self-reflect, check their own bias, listen actively and demonstrate cultural awareness. Training in cultural competence can provide staff with the skills they need to practise and promote diversity. Existing training programs can be reviewed and adapted, such as recruitment or interviewing skills to better respond to diversity issues.

The aim of diversity training is to raise participants' awareness of aspects of diversity and determine how these are applied in the workplace. This will be of benefit to both the organisation and the team as well as individual staff. It should focus on practical application of how diversity can be embedded at work on a daily basis.

Here are some examples of different areas of diversity training.

Cultural competence

Cultural competence training can be general or specific. Staff may need to be trained in skills to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Training can also support people to interact effectively with one particular group by offering knowledge about its history and culture that serves as the basis for skill development. This enables effective and appropriate communication and engagement with people of that cultural group, because of an increased understanding of the issues relevant to their culture (both historically and in the present day).

Equal opportunity

Equal opportunity training supports a positive, collaborative and fair workplace culture. It reduces an organisation's risk of claims for sexual harassment, bullying and bias against promotions based on age, sexuality or gender. It can be used to help staff explore strategies for ensuring everyone has equal opportunities in the workplace.

Workplace bullying

Training to reduce workplace bullying, discrimination or harassment informs employees about what is unacceptable behaviour in the workplace. It also covers the consequences of this behaviour in line with organisational policies and procedures, which are underpinned by relevant legislation.

Grievance management

Employees need to know how to make a complaint about alleged discrimination, harassment or bullying. Managers and HR team members need to understand the workplace's grievance and dispute-handling procedures. Training may also include how to identify grievances before they escalate and need to be formally lodged.

Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection training emphasises the need for non-discriminatory practices during the recruitment and selection process. Strategies to avoid indirect and direct discrimination in recruitment and selection should be explored.

Ethics

Ethics training focuses on the established ethics for working in a particular industry. Definitions of ethics and the content of codes of conduct are discussed. This may be a part of an induction course for new staff or ongoing professional development.

Human rights
Human rights training focuses on human rights legislation and people's rights and responsibilities. This is especially valuable for community service workers working with people from refugee and asylum-seeker families. It links human rights legislation and day-to-day work with these families.

Training design and delivery

Training can be provided by an internal staff member (such as a human resources manager) or by an external agency or trainer. Training provided by someone external to the organisation can be useful, as someone who is unfamiliar to the team can sometimes introduce new ideas and perspectives more successfully. These activities can require active participation from staff, such as in role-play, acting out situations and practising communication skills in interactions with others.

Types of training include:
• training sessions offered by specialist staff employed by the organisation. For example: training in seeing trans clients that is led by a trans staff member • an online course or module for staff • attendance of staff at a formal training course.

Example
Providing training on appropriate behaviour

A disability services provider has several centres located around Australia. There has been some rising tension between the staff of the head office (based in Sydney) and the staff of the Northern Territory centre, which is predominantly made up of First Nations peoples.

A rumour has been circulating that the Sydney-based staff (who are mainly of European descent) do not respect the First Nations staff at the NT centre and believe them to be too laid back and not committed to their work. The head office has decided to conduct cultural awareness training for all employees on the importance of appropriate behaviour in their interactions with each other.

Practice Task 3

Question 1

Match each term about diversity and culture to its definition.

Cultural competence	Knowledge, awareness and acceptance of other cultures and other people's cultural identities
Inclusivity	Being able to interact effectively with people of different cultures and backgrounds
Cultural awareness	A work environment that accepts all people and is free from discrimination
A culturally safe workplace	Treating everyone fairly and equally

Question 2

Give two examples of how a leader might demonstrate their respect for diversity.

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

Case study

Ciaran has been nominated as a coach for a newly employed, inexperienced support worker, Paula. They work at an organisation that supports people with disability by operating several community centres.

Ciaran observes the following conversation between Paula and one of the clients of the community centre, Jack, who has Down syndrome.

Jack points out what he thinks is a funny hat that Avi, another client, is wearing and Paula suggests they ask Avi about it. Avi tells Jack that he wears the hat called a yarmulke because he is Jewish. Paula then starts a conversation with the group about cultural differences and similarities in the group.

Question 3

What are three things Ciaran could say to Paula that specifically acknowledge what she got right in her interactions with the group?

Question 4

Ciaran has suggested some training options that he feels Paula may find interesting. Match each type of training to its description.

Grievance management training	Skills needed to effectively interact with people of different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds
Cultural competence training	Covers appropriate behaviour and the risk of claims for sexual harassment, bullying and bias against people based on age, sexuality or gender
Human rights training	Information on how to make a complaint about alleged discrimination, harassment or bullying
Recruitment and selection training	Exploring the use of non-discriminatory practices during the process of selecting new employees for particular positions
Equal opportunity training	Understanding of everyone's most basic rights and responsibilities

2B Plan work practices that respect diversity

It takes time to create an environment where everyone feels safe, respected and valued.

Working in the community services industry, you will be aware of the various compliance requirements of your role. Various frameworks, guidelines, standards and principles are used to develop standards of support and govern the scope of community services roles.

Guides for appropriate practice
• United Nations Declaration of Human Rights
• National and state/territory legislation, such as age, racial and sex discrimination, health and safety rights and responsibilities and equal employment opportunity (EEO) laws
• Organisational policies and procedures that reflect legislation and provide guidelines for staff on ways to implement laws and regulations
• Aged Care Quality Standards – if you work in an aged care role • Mental Health Standards – if you work in a role in mental health • NDIS Quality Standards – if you work in a service funded by the NDIS or as an independent sub-contracting NDIS support worker

Anti-discrimination legislation

Discrimination is illegal in Australia.

Services providing support to clients operate under the same federal laws and national standards as other businesses across Australia.

National anti-discrimination legislation is outlined below:

Age discrimination: *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth)	The Age Discrimination Act protects people who are discriminated against because of their age. It states that, regardless of age, everyone has the same right to equality before the law. The Act also allows appropriate benefits to be given to people of a certain age, particularly younger and older people, according to their circumstances. Its objectives include removing barriers to older people and people with disability participating in society, and changing negative stereotypes.

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

Disability: *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)	The Disability Discrimination Act gives a broad definition of disability and prohibits direct or indirect discrimination based on disability. It prohibits discrimination against people who associate with anyone who has a disability, whether they be friends, relatives, carers or co-workers. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in the areas of: • employment • education • access to public premises • purchase of house and land • provision of goods, services and facilities • administration of Commonwealth Government laws and programs.
Racial discrimination: *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth) *Racial Hatred Act 1995* (Cth)	The Racial Discrimination Act prohibits racial discrimination and offensive behaviour based on racial hatred. It covers discrimination based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin. It also protects those who may be discriminated against based on their association with people of a particular ethnicity. The Racial Hatred Act forms part of the Racial Discrimination Act and provides an avenue for people to complain about racist behaviour that offends, insults, humiliates or intimidates others in public.
Sex discrimination: *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)	The Sex Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone based on their sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy. It sets out laws against sexual harassment as well as dismissal from work based on family duties including pregnancy. According to the Act, it is unlawful to refuse to provide goods or services, education or employment based on a person's sex. The Act also covers discrimination within awards and enterprise bargaining, insurance and superannuation, Commonwealth laws and programs, and accommodation. Sexual harassment is included in the Act because it is a form of discrimination to treat a person unfairly because of their sex.

Human rights: *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth)	The Human Rights Commission Act promotes human rights for all people, and covers most forms of discrimination not already covered in the other Acts, including discrimination on the basis of: • criminal records • marital status • medical records • political opinions • religion • sexual preference • social origin • trade union activity. The Australian Human Rights Commission deals with breaches of anti-discrimination laws and promotes human rights education.
Privacy: *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)	The Privacy Act covers all organisations that collect personal information, including information about clients. Personal information covered by this Act includes: • criminal records • medical and health records • membership of a professional or trade association • membership of a trade union • political affiliations or opinions • racial or ethnic origin • religious affiliations or beliefs • sexual orientation or practices. Every organisation should inform its users of its responsibilities regarding privacy requirements. It is always advisable to treat any information provided to you about any individual as confidential. People generally have a right to be provided with any of their personal information held by an organisation.

State/territory anti-discrimination law

Anti-discrimination legislation varies between states and territories with respect to the specific aspects covered.

However, the overall intent of each piece of legislation is the same: to prevent unlawful discrimination and harassment of people in the Australian community. The table below lists the agencies that deal with anti-discrimination legislation in each state and territory.

State/territory	Agency	Legislation
ACT	ACT Human Rights Commission	*Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT)
NSW	Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)
NT	Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1992* (NT)
Qld	Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (QLD)
SA	South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission	*Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (SA)
Tas.	Equal Opportunity Tasmania	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (TAS)
Vic.	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	*Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (VIC)
WA	WA Equal Opportunity Commission	*Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (WA)

Equal employment opportunity

Everyone is entitled to equal opportunity in employment, benefits and associated services in the workplace.

Equal employment opportunity laws are aimed at ensuring that the job recruitment and selection process is fair, and that workplace outcomes with respect to supervision and management are not biased.

Commonwealth and state/territory laws overlap in relation to discrimination in the workplace. The Commonwealth legislation is referred to as the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010.*

Equal employment opportunity legislation is designed to ensure that:
• fair practices are in place in every workplace
• the best person is recruited and/or promoted when there is a position vacant, and skilled staff are retained
• workplace management decisions are fair to all employees
• training and development needs address the community and staff requirements
• the workplace is free of harassment and discrimination
• social and cultural differences between staff are recognised and respected.

Read more about how businesses can provide equal opportunity employment in Australia here: aspirelr.link/equal-opportunity-and-diversity

Codes of conduct

A code of conduct offers guidance on a range of ethical issues that people may confront in their day-to-day work.

A **code of conduct** includes a collection of policies or guidelines that define the specific actions or procedures applicable to an organisation or workplace. A code of conduct usually applies to anyone who conducts business or provides services to an organisation. It is usually developed in consultation with staff and underpinned by a range of federal Acts, national standards and state or territory legislation.

A code of conduct is a reminder of an employee's responsibilities to other people and can overlap or support the diversity objectives of a workplace.

Code of conduct
A set of rules that informs employees how to act in a workplace.

A code of conduct can cover standards of behaviour relating to:	
• personal behaviour • honesty, integrity, fairness and equity • performance of duty • conflicts of interest • acceptance of gifts and benefits • outside employment and voluntary work • public comment • use of facilities and equipment	• intellectual property or copyright • use of computer, intranet, internet and email services • bullying, harassment and discrimination • breaches of codes of conduct, privacy and confidentiality • corrupt conduct and maladministration • workplace health and safety.

Workplace health and safety

Everyone in the workplace needs to understand the importance of health and safety.

Employees rely on commitment, consultation and cooperation from everyone as they carry out their responsibilities and obligations under health and safety laws.

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) was designed by the Australian Government as a model law aimed at harmonising health and safety laws across all states and territories. The aim was to make sure that regardless of where a person works in Australia they have the same rights and protection as everyone else. All states and territories (also called 'jurisdictions'), except Western Australia and Victoria, have adopted harmonised work health and safety (WHS) laws in line with the Commonwealth legislation.

Western Australia works under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* (WA), while Victoria operates under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic.).

Workers and employers have different rights and responsibilities in the workplace.

Employer duties & responsibilities	Worker duties & responsibilities
• Provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace • Provide and maintain safe plant (equipment) and structures • Provide and maintain safe systems of work • Ensure safe use, handling and storage of plant, structures and substances • Provide adequate facilities for the welfare of workers • Provide information, instruction and supervision about WHS related issues at the workplace • Monitor workplace conditions and the health of workers	• Take reasonable care for their own health and safety • Take reasonable care of others, considering duty of care and dignity of risk • Work safely around clients, co-workers and supervisors • Never perform a task they have not been trained or supervised in

Example
Assist colleagues to accept diversity

Anthony often uses offensive language in the staffroom when talking to his colleagues. He thinks it's funny and that anyone offended should just 'get over it'. After receiving several complaints from other staff and witnessing the offensive language herself, Anthony's supervisor decides to speak to him.

Anthony explains that he has always spoken like that with his colleagues and that at his previous workplace, no one ever mentioned it as being a problem. The supervisor explains to Anthony that it is not acceptable to use abusive language as a joke in the workplace. She discusses the diverse make-up of the staff and tells him he needs to be aware of the workplace culture of acceptance and harmony the organisation wants to encourage.

With some follow-up meetings and coaching from his supervisor, Anthony better understands he needs to have more awareness of his behaviour and be more considerate of opinions and values that are different from his own.

Practice Task 4

Question 1

An applicant for a support worker position is told that her application has been unsuccessful because the employer wants more males in the workplace.

- What legislation has been breached in this scenario?

- What form of unlawful discrimination has taken place?

Question 2

A person with a disability who applies for a position as a support worker is requested to have a driver's licence even though it is not a requirement of the job.

- What legislation has been breached in this scenario?

- What form of unlawful discrimination has taken place?

Question 3

An applicant for a support worker position is told that his application for the position has been denied because he is too old.

- What legislation has been breached in this scenario?

- What form of unlawful discrimination has taken place?

Question 4

Match each term about legislation with its description.

WHS rights and responsibilities	Covers most forms of discrimination not included in the other Acts, including discrimination on the basis of criminal record, marital status, medical records, etc.
Equal employment opportunity	Covers discrimination based on race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin and association with people of a particular ethnicity
Racial discrimination	An employer's responsibility to protect their staff from harassment, bullying or discrimination
Human rights	Ensures that the job recruitment and selection process is fair, and that workplace outcomes with respect to supervision and management are not biased

Equitable activities

Recreational and social activities arranged for staff and clients can help build rapport and positive relationships. These can be used as part of an induction program for new clients or as a way of welcoming new staff or celebrating a particular milestone or special day such as Children's Day, Chinese New Year or R U OK Day. Getting people together can help them establish relationships and make everyone feel part of the community.

When planning is being undertaken, it is essential that organised activities do not limit or restrict participation. Activities need to be planned with a diverse community in mind, which means that everyone is able to participate. For example, instead of only offering a physical activity task, plan to provide options for activities that involve other skills such as teamwork, problem-solving or cooperation.

Considering the diversity of the group may mean:
• ensuring activities do not coincide with any religious holidays • considering the physical requirements of the activity • providing information in a variety of languages and accessible in various formats such as hard copy, from the web or sent in an email • incorporating activities that require individuals to develop a better understanding of each other.

Principles and practices of inclusion

Principles and practices should outline how the organisation will ensure **inclusion** in the workplace. The simple principle of inclusivity is to ensure that no one is left out – that no matter where they come from, what they know, how they speak or what their belief system is, they have a right to be included.

The key for organisations is to have work practices that nurture a sense of community. Inclusivity does not mean that everyone must conform to one way of thinking or behaving. In fact, the opposite is true. Celebrating everyone's differences and accepting them is the path to inclusivity.

Some inclusive practices and ways of supporting diversity are outlined below.

Inclusion
Providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or left out.

Inclusivity practices	Diversity practices
• Identify individual needs and differences.	• Ensure senior staff model inclusive behaviour.
• Create opportunities where everyone can participate.	• Ensure physical access to a workplace is not limiting.
• Respect the rights of the individual.	• Communicate in different ways to ensure understanding.
• Encourage people to reflect on their attitudes to other people's differences.	• Allow for flexible working hours.
• Continuously improve policy, procedure and practice to ensure inclusivity.	• Provide continuous education for all staff on diversity and inclusive practices.

You can show your support for clients and demonstrate your commitment to equity and inclusion by:

- helping clients build strong social networks by participating in community-based services, such as different social opportunities, programs and groups

- understanding the different types of support required for clients at risk, including:

  - clients experiencing trauma

  - clients living in out of home care

  - refugees

  - clients experiencing intergenerational poverty

- providing useful information about local community services that cater for diverse clients

- providing opportunities for collaboration and sharing of ideas and experiences

- empowering families and carers to make decisions about appropriate support for the person they are caring for

- ensuring a welcoming and accessible physical environment for all clients.

Video: Diversity and inclusion practices
You can hear more about the Department of Education's diversity and inclusion practices here: aspirelr.link/vimeo-diversity-inclusion

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Barriers to inclusion

Barriers to inclusion can be overt, however others are more subtle and may take time to recognise and address.

Here are some examples of barriers to inclusion that you might look for:

Physical barriers
These barriers prevent participation for some people with disabilities. Often, these physical barriers are an immediate exclusion from participation. For example, stairs can make it impossible for some people to access the required area, and low lighting can create poor visibility for people with low vision.
Social/emotional barriers
These barriers might be psychological and more difficult to detect. They may include factors that make it difficult for a person to participate at work, such as prejudicial attitudes, socioeconomic status (lack of money) or lack of confidence in being able to understand what is required or what is being asked.

Lack of cultural competence
In some cases, the lack of knowledge of managers or staff can be a barrier to inclusion. Sometimes people's words or attitudes foster an atmosphere of exclusion, however the person is unaware of the effect they are having on others. For example, they may unknowingly exclude staff from their conversation or invitations to social activities outside the workplace.

Example
Incorporating diversity and inclusivity

A community service organisation providing a range of family support services was located in a community where the Sudanese population was growing rapidly. A few of the staff said they struggled to understand some aspects of Sudanese culture, which was creating some difficulties and barriers in how they worked with families. The supervisors and managers decided to hire a Sudanese cultural worker who could liaise with the local Sudanese community. The new worker, Aziz, not only worked with the local community, but was able to train staff in Sudanese culture. Aziz was also able to bring in some Sudanese celebrations for the workplace to celebrate. Aziz also began a few different Sudanese-specific social programs designed to engage the Sudanese community. Simply by having a specific cultural worker, all of the staff noticed that clients and families were more comfortable and more open to receiving help.

Managing tensions

Tensions and issues sometimes arise between people who see themselves as different from one another.

Conflict can arise in a workplace for several reasons. It may be due to a lack of cultural awareness or it may be a purposeful set of behaviours or actions aimed to hurt or inflame another. This might be the result of an unresolved issue or a world event that may inflate tensions between staff from different backgrounds.

Tensions can often be the result of miscommunication. This may occur because a team member:

- does not understand another person because they have an accent, are softly spoken or misuse the English language

- interprets directness as aggression or indirectness as evasiveness

- has a different sense of humour or laughs when nervous, which another person sees as being dismissive or failing to take a matter seriously

- becomes annoyed with a person who always needs to be shown how to do something rather than working it out themselves

- is frustrated by always having to watch what they say in case they make a comment that is unintentionally offensive to another person

- attempts to resolve a difference of opinion by argument, rather than an exchange of views in a structured discussion.

When conflict occurs, a supervisor's role is to listen to each party and negotiate a solution. Unresolved and ongoing conflict can lead to poor team morale and affect a harmonious workplace culture. There are several ways to get the parties together to discuss and work together to find a solution:

- An individual meeting can provide an opportunity for the parties to air their differences, understand each other's points of view and come to an agreement. This can be done in a safe environment where the supervisor acts as a mediator and helps the parties find common ground or a way to move forward.

- Staff meetings can be used to discuss tensions and work together to solve problems that affect the whole workplace, such as divisions between groups that result from differences in values, opinions and beliefs.

- Informal opportunities for discussion are useful, as they may defuse a situation before a small difference escalates into a bigger issue.

Example
Work plans that support diversity

The staff at a youth residential service have a diverse range of requirements. There are several single parents with young and school-age children, a person with a chronic health issue who requires additional sick leave, and one employee who is a carer for an ill parent.

To manage and support their staff, the supervisors and house managers have a specially designed rotating schedule for each of the youth residential group homes. Each staff member has an individual work plan which allows them some flexibility with their working hours with early starts and early finishing times and other options for later start and finishing times. The staff all work hard and are appreciative of the work culture that strives to support them and values their contribution.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

Which of the following are correct statements about diversity and inclusive practices? Select yes or no for each one.

a. To ensure you are being inclusive, you should consider the physical requirements of an activity.	Yes / No
b. The principle of inclusivity is to ensure that no one is left out.	Yes / No
c. Diversity practices mean that everyone has the same work hours.	Yes / No
d. Equitable practices can help to establish a sense of value and belonging.	Yes / No

Question 2

Outline two barriers to inclusion and give an example for each one.

2C Promote the value of a diverse workforce

Workplaces that are diverse, inclusive, welcoming and respectful are likely to have better internal and external relationships and offer better services.

A supportive workplace that encourages diversity might receive public recognition and respect, high staff retention and a high degree of satisfaction and approval from clients.

In order to be strong in this area staff need to understand diversity, either through their own lived experience or though more formal training and supervision. The role of a supervisor is to help foster understanding of the benefits of diversity with each staff member. They can make sure the diversity objectives, as stated in policies, are implemented to ensure the organisation is practising what it preaches. Having integrity and follow-through will support the organisation's image and reputation.

Benefits of a diverse workforce

If you work as a supervisor, you need to believe in the benefits of a diverse workforce.

Remember, your words and actions need to match. Take time to reflect on your own cultural competence and honestly consider whether you are modelling diversity-positive behaviour in how you:

- interact with staff

- handle difference

- listen to other people's points of view

- learn about the backgrounds, beliefs and cultures of staff to improve your relations with them

- encourage collaboration between groups of people

- take action to manage tensions and to deal with complaints of discrimination.

Some benefits of a workplace that values diversity include:

Staff morale	Having a range of cultures, backgrounds, ages and abilities contributes to an interesting and lively workplace, with high staff morale and a variety of opinions and points of view.

Productivity and conditions	Working harmoniously with others lessens tensions and increases productivity. Understanding and respecting different cultures, points of view and opinions leads to a workplace that is free from harassment, discrimination and bullying.
Ideas and access	A workplace can use ideas and information from the diversity of its workforce to contribute to its competitive advantage. For example, having staff who speak other languages and understand other cultures provides a pool of people to help resolve problems when working with people, both inside and outside the organisation, from diverse backgrounds.
Trust and connection	Understanding clients' situations and backgrounds helps you develop rapport and improves the services you offer. Demonstrating a commitment to diversity helps to raise the organisation's profile and build trust within the community.

Strategies you can use with staff to promote diversity objectives include:

- informal discussions with the team when an issue arises based on a person's differences

- formal discussion of the benefits of a diverse workforce during a team meeting

- holding a session in which team members talk about their culture, traditions and life experiences

- using real figures and examples, highlighting instances where gender, race or age balance have changed; for example, when there are more women or people of colour in leadership positions

- acknowledging and celebrating people's achievements

- inviting experts in diversity to speak to the team.

Staff induction sessions are a key opportunity to discuss the issue of diversity and promote the workplace's policy and commitment to diversity. This message can be repeated at regular intervals during staff meetings, refresher training, team meetings, staff communications (such as newsletters) and performance appraisals. By reinforcing the message it makes it clear to staff that diversity is important at all levels of the organisation.

Diversity can be referred to in informal situations, as well as formal ones, so that diversity is seen as part of day-to-day operations and the culture of the workplace, rather than as a separate issue that needs to be addressed.

When promoting the benefits of diversity, use examples to demonstrate ways the workplace is meeting its diversity objectives.

Action on diversity objectives might include:

- embedding flexible working arrangements to support staff who have parenting and caring responsibilities
- increasing the number of older workers employed
- employing a mix of genders
- employing staff who can speak the languages of the local community, to meet changing needs and nurture relationships
- offering services to the broader community, such as having a liaison officer who speaks a specific language
- seeking ideas and information from people from other cultures to obtain a greater understanding of other people's points of view
- increasing interactions with the local community and representatives of diverse groups
- ensuring clients can choose the gender of their support worker
- seeking input from staff with disabilities and mental health needs on ways to improve the workplace to assist them to work more effectively
- actively promoting diversity as a strategy to attract new clients.

Example
Establishing a network of diversity contact officers

A supervisor is aware of increasing numbers of complaints about harassment, bullying and discrimination being reported in the media. She decides that to ensure their service is on top of this issue, she should remind staff of discrimination legislation and the benefits of a diverse work force, as well as what this means to the service and their clients.

The supervisor suggests that one member of staff be allocated the role of diversity support worker. This has been done in some other community service organisations to great success. This person can raise the diversity profile of the workplace in the community and with their families, act as a sounding board for staff and promote compliance with the organisation's diversity policy. The committee decides to prepare a proposal for a diversity contact officer to be appointed in the organisation. The supervisor says she will take the proposal to the business owner for discussion.

Promoting diversity to staff

Take every opportunity to support the organisation's diversity objectives.

Ideas and information can come from collaborating with a variety of people, including:

- staff who have overseas work experience and contacts that they can ask for information

- staff or families who speak different languages and understand different cultures and traditions

- men and women who have experienced discrimination because of age, gender, sexual orientation or disability

- staff who themselves live with a disability or a mental health issue, or care for someone who does.

Here are some methods to promote diversity objectives to staff and families.

Newsletters and bulletins
Include articles on difference such as learning styles, staff profiles to demonstrate the organisation's diversity, or improvements that provide better access for people with disabilities. As a manager or supervisor, you can: • use the newsletter to promote the diversity of staff and celebrate important cultural events • offer help to organise, attend and participate in a range of cultural activities • write articles for the newsletter about cultural activities.

Staff updates
Staff updates can be used to celebrate achievements associated with diversity, such as an employee's return to work after maternity leave or a male staff member changing to part-time hours in order to care for his children.

Posters and noticeboards
The organisation can translate posters and notices providing safety, quality and other important information into languages spoken in the local community.

Recruitment and induction
Staff induction materials should explain the diversity policy and procedures, and can include a component that provides training in cultural awareness. Managers can: • set up a mentorship program for new staff from diverse backgrounds • offer to conduct this part of the induction training or write this part of the induction training kit.

Website
The organisation's website or intranet may be used to showcase events where people get together to share an activity, such as a morning tea to celebrate a culturally important event. A website can use images that reflect a wide and diverse population.
Promote workplace efforts
As a manager or supervisor, you can: • promote workplace efforts in the media and at conferences • research suitable industry journals, magazines and other publications and suggest writing an article for them • apply for awards for excellence in diversity.

Example
Spreading the word

Ciaran works as the community relations manager for an organisation that has been awarded the title of 'Most inclusive aged care provider'. The business is expanding based on its enhanced reputation. Ciaran has been asked by the CEO to speak at a forthcoming conference for aged care providers.

After talking to the CEO and the managers in the aged care centres run by the organisation, Ciaran prepares a presentation for the conference. He plans the content of his presentation as follows:

- Overview of the organisation, including geographical spread of centres

- Mission statement of organisation

- Diversity policy

- How the diversity policy is implemented in:

  - recruitment of staff

  - customer service and staff interactions with residents, visitors and other staff

  - activities run in centres

  - other services, including interpreters used with healthcare professionals' consultations

  - types of food provided, following input from residents

  - design of centres to include promenade areas, communal squares and cafes

- Involving residents in the running of the centres

- Plans for the future

His presentation is well-received, and Ciaran runs out of time to respond to all the questions. He spends the break talking further about his organisation's commitment to diversity and how this is implemented across all its aged care centres.

Practice Task 6

Question 1

Give three examples of diversity objectives in action.

Question 2

Provide three examples of methods that would promote an organisation's reputation as valuing a diverse workforce.

Summary

- An effective leader recognises, respects and understands what makes people different and knows how to work effectively with those differences so the person feels supported and can contribute maximally.

- This begins with cultural awareness from interactions with people from different social and cultural backgrounds from your own.

- In a culturally safe workplace everyone feels safe to express their identity and say what they need and who they are without fear of being challenged or having that request denied.

- Coaching and mentoring can be used to promote and encourage diversity practices in an organisation or as a way of improving the cultural awareness of an employee.

- Training in cultural competence can be used to provide staff with the skills they need to practise and promote diversity.

- Equitable activities need to be planned with a diverse community in mind, making it possible for everyone to participate.

- The principle of inclusivity is to ensure that no one is left out – no matter where they come from, what they know, how they speak or what they believe.

- Barriers to inclusion can be overt or subtle, and may take time to recognise and address.

- Use examples of objectives and actions when promoting the benefits of diversity.

- Take every opportunity to support the strategies that the workplace has in place to value diversity.

Learning Checkpoint 2

Foster diversity

Part A

1. Provide two examples of behaviours a supervisor or manager could model to demonstrate that they value diversity.

2. Match each term about diversity and culture to its description.

Inclusivity	Knowledge, awareness and acceptance of other cultures and other people's cultural identities
Cultural awareness	Feeling comfortable about interacting with others from different cultures and backgrounds
Indirect discrimination	Developing a workplace culture where people feel accepted and free from discrimination
Cultural competence	Making an effort to include everyone in workplace activities
Cultural safety	Using the links that exist between staff to bring them together

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

a. Coaching offers people the chance to practise skills in a supportive environment.	Yes / No
b. The purpose of coaching is to recognise and validate the skills of the coach.	Yes / No
c. A formal report is required at the end of a mentoring program.	Yes / No
d. Coaching is generally preferred to mentoring because supervision isn't necessary in the workplace.	Yes / No
e. Mentoring involves pairing up with someone with significant experience, skills and knowledge in a particular area.	Yes / No

4. Which of the following statements relate to the legal and ethical considerations for managers regarding diversity practices? Tick all that apply.

❑ An organisation's code of conduct is used to ensure workers get the promotion they deserve.

❑ Anti-discrimination legislation covers age, disability, racial and sexual discrimination.

❑ The *Australian Human Rights Commission Act* covers aspects of discrimination not covered by other anti-discrimination laws, such as protection of criminal and medical records.

❑ The *Equal Opportunity Act* aims to free workplaces of discrimination and harassment.

❑ Under the *Work Health and Safety Act,* the worker has the primary duty of care.

5. Identify three things that are important to consider to ensure activities planned for staff are equitable and respect diversity.

6. Give two examples of professional development activities for a staff member in an organisation who requires training in cultural competence.

7. Which of the following demonstrate a supportive workplace that values diversity? Tick all that apply.

- ❑ Using induction programs to reinforce the diversity objectives and policies of the service

- ❑ Providing flexible work arrangements that support staff with children or who are caring for a family member

- ❑ Arranging training on ways staff can practise their values and beliefs at work

- ❑ Referring to the code of conduct document to address prejudice and deal with complaints of discrimination

- ❑ Translating information for clients into relevant community languages

8. Collaboration can give rise to ideas that help an organisation meet their diversity objectives. Give two examples of people to collaborate with who may have useful experience or knowledge.

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

a. Inclusivity means that everyone must conform to one way of thinking or behaving.	Yes / No
b. To maintain and ensure inclusivity, policies, procedures and practices need to be continuously reviewed and improved.	Yes / No
c. Some situations act like barriers that make it difficult for people to participate fully at work.	Yes / No
d. Cultural competence means creating a culture of inclusion so all staff can feel part of the team.	Yes / No

Part B

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

Case study

A student has begun a three-week placement at NeuCare, a residential aged care home. He has only recently arrived in Australia from a country that expects women to behave very differently from the way women behave here. This has resulted in episodes of friction between him, staff and clients. When his manager, Maria, has a discussion with him, he responds positively and understands he has to modify his behaviour in order to complete his placement at the facility and eventually become a qualified support worker.

1. What are two tips Maria could give the student for working with people from a different culture?

2. Maria stresses the importance of having the right attitude in order to achieve success. List three qualities that the student should embrace in order to achieve success.

**3.** Provide two tips Maria could give the student for dealing with people who have a different belief or value system.

4. Maria recognises the value of inclusion and mentoring. She asks Celine to become the student's mentor as she is both an incredibly hard worker and has fantastic interpersonal skills. What are two positive effects Maria may hope will result from this pairing?

Topic 3: Adapt communication strategies

3A Communicate to diverse groups

3B Tailor communication strategies for people
with different needs

3C Reflect on the use of communication strategies
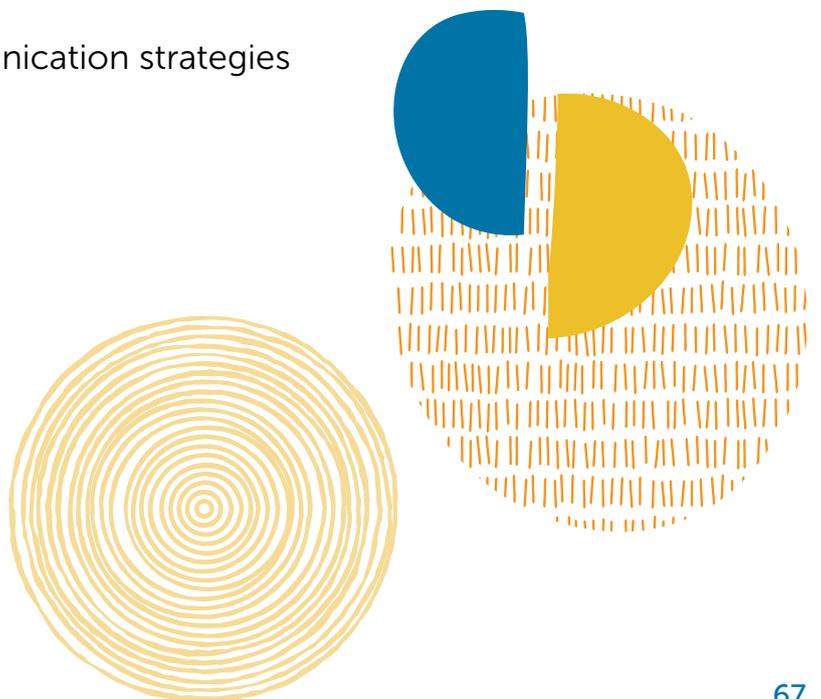
3A Communicate to diverse groups

Good communication skills are essential in all aspects of community services work.

Communicating with people who don't speak English as a first language takes sensitivity, skill and patience. You should select an appropriate communication technique to get your message across, seek feedback to confirm the person has understood, and make sure you have obtained any information you need. This will be appreciated by both your staff and the clients who use the service.

The way you use language conveys information about yourself and your attitudes. When you use language that is inclusive, you demonstrate that you are inclusive and unbiased. Biased language indicates that you value people differently based on their gender, race, age, economic status, sexual orientation, religion, politics or other personal characteristic. Unbiased language stays clear of stereotyping. It signals that the speaker is respectful and fair.

When you use language that is inclusive, welcoming and kind, it creates a work climate that is safe for clients and staff. Unbiased and respectful language avoids the use of words and phrases that are:

- racist
- sexist
- discriminatory
- stereotypical
- derogatory.

To be sure your language is unbiased, consider whether the words you use may exclude someone or make them feel less valued than others. Try not to make generalisations. The words you choose should relate to the topic being discussed and should not be used to label individuals. For example, there is no need to include information on gender, skin colour or physical characteristics unless it is relevant to the discussion.

To be sure about the words you use, you can ask the person you are referring to how they would like to be described. For example, you could ask a person how they would describe their impairment. This can be different for each person. Some will feel uncomfortable with particular words, others will be open to a range of terms.

Strategies for using inclusive language
• Consider using the plural pronoun 'they/them' or referring to someone by their title, such as 'the manager' or 'the doctor' rather than always using 'he/him' or 'she/her'. Where appropriate, ask people what their preferred pronouns are.
• If you know someone is in a relationship, consider using the word 'partner' rather than 'husband/wife' or 'girlfriend/boyfriend' when you don't know the person well. Many people do not marry and their relationship may not be heterosexual. Using the word 'partner' can avoid making people feel left out or embarrassed.

Strategies for using inclusive language
• Revise wording to be gender inclusive; for example, 'Each staff member should sign their timesheet', rather than, 'Each staff member should sign his timesheet'.
• Don't use broad categories to describe groups of people. Terms such as 'blind people', 'Asians' or 'the gay community' exclude the possibility of differences within these wide definitions, and focus on one characteristic that the individuals themselves may object to being categorised by.

The Diversity Council have put together a guide on how to use inclusive language in the workplace, 'WordsAtWork': aspirelr.link/dca-words-at-work

Example
Avoiding biased communication

The following is a story told in two different ways. The first story labels people based on personal information, such as their gender, skin colour, age and health status. All of these factors are irrelevant to the issue being discussed. The second story uses only the information that is relevant.

Example 1

Two ladies arrived at work and accused the cleaner of not doing his job properly. Marilyn, the black support worker, and Louise, the cook, accused Mr Edgar of not cleaning the staff bathroom. Mr Edgar is 42 years old and an epileptic. He says that he has had no complaints before.

Example 2

Two staff arrived at work and accused the cleaner of not doing his job properly. Marilyn, a support worker, and Louise, the cook, accused Mr Edgar of not cleaning the staff bathroom. Mr Edgar says that he has had no complaints before.

Forms of communication

Communication is a two-way process involving the sending and receiving of messages.

Negotiation, conflict resolution, teamwork, collaboration and completing work tasks all rely on communication skills. Effective communication skills are essential for ensuring that the tone and content of the message is appropriate. Communication can be verbal (spoken in words) or nonverbal (demonstrated through body language, facial expression or gesture) and both are equally important. Sometimes we communicate more by what we don't say than by what we do.

Here are some different methods of communication.

Verbal communication	Verbal communication is a spoken message delivered face-to-face or over the phone.
	Verbal messages may be used in meetings, when a supervisor asks someone in their team to do a task, when exchanging information formally or informally, or when you are telling others about your opinions and ideas.
Written communication	Written communication is a written message, such as emails, text messages, memos, written instructions, letters and newsletters.
	Effective written communication is clear, concise and can be easily understood by the intended recipient.
Body language	Body language adds additional meaning to verbal communication through body movements or gestures. It is often done unconsciously and helps express how you feel without having to say anything at all.
	For example, if you are uncomfortable talking to someone, you may look at the ground. If you are feeling worried or anxious, you may wring your hands or tap your foot.
Gestures	Gestures are specific kinds of body language that convey particular messages in the context of a culture or group. Some gestures have different meanings in different cultures. For example, in Australia the thumbs up gesture communicates that everything is okay. However, in other cultures, this gesture may be considered rude.
Facial expressions	The way your face moves, whether you are speaking or not, conveys information about your internal state. Humans are very alert to facial expressions, as well as body language.
	For example, facial expressions can indicate mood or state of being. A smile or frown may indicate pleasure or concern, respectively.
Signs	Signs are pictorial or short written messages that are usually displayed in prominent locations. Signs with pictographs are used so that people who cannot read can still understand the message. For example, a pedestrian crossing sign will have an image of a person walking.
Sign language	Sign language may be used by those with a hearing impairment or learning difficulty. Auslan (Australian sign language) is the language of the deaf community in Australia. Other sign languages include Compic, where pictographs are used to communicate, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, where a computerised interface produces verbal language.

Cross-cultural communication strategies

Non-verbal as well as verbal communication differs between cultures.

Here are some factors that may affect communication, including some related to cultural differences.

Attitudes
Having a negative attitude towards the message or person you are communicating with may reduce the success of the communication. Prejudices or biases about the message may stop effective communication. Likewise, approval or disapproval of the other person is likely to affect what you tell them and how you communicate with them. For example, if you are feeling uncomfortable about having to ask a client a personal question and forget to explain why you need to know, the person may answer briefly and leave out important information required for their support.

Stereotyping
When you stereotype someone, you assume you know what the person thinks or how they will behave. This undermines your ability to truly listen and you may not receive and understand the true message the person is trying to communicate. You may dismiss people without hearing what they have to say because you have stereotyped them as having particular beliefs and attitudes.

Assumptions
An assumption is when you take for granted that something is true without thinking or enquiring about it. For example, you might assume that all Indonesian people are Muslim. Making assumptions about people has the same effect as stereotyping them: if the assumption is wrong it can make you less receptive to hearing what they have to say.

Values
Values describe the beliefs and morals of an individual, culture or organisation. Values often have an emotional element and therefore have considerable influence over communication with others. It is not realistic to be completely value-free in your judgments or communication. Instead, you need to understand that other people may be viewing the same situation or issue from a different value stance, and to take these differences into account when you are discussing something or trying to reach an agreement.

Environment
A friendly, trusting and quiet environment supports effective communication. Noise is an obvious barrier, but visual distractions and a tense atmosphere can also affect communication. For example, if you try to talk while there are roadworks in the background, your communication would be difficult due to the distractions in the surrounding environment.

Body language

Body language can tell us as much about how someone is feeling as the words they use – sometimes more.

With this in mind, think about the body language a person is displaying and consider if there is a consistent message it is giving.

Crossing your arms, keeping your head down or frowning may show others that you are not interested in what they are saying, or that you are angry or upset. Smiling, facing the person and maintaining eye contact can show you are interested and welcome what they have to say. Sometimes there is a mismatch between the verbal and nonverbal messages a person communicates, for example, the person says they're 'fine' but their body language indicates that they are upset and stressed.

As we all know, sometimes a message is not received in the way it is intended. This can be even more the case with nonverbal communication.

Touching	By touching another person, you might think you are being friendly, however, it may make the other person feel uncomfortable. Some cultures have strong taboos about physical touch between people who are not family.
Glancing	Glancing away may tell a person that you are not concentrating on what they are saying or that you are distracted. Looking directly at the person and maintaining eye contact communicates that you are listening and taking the conversation seriously. However, be aware that some people and cultures find constant eye contact intimidating or rude.
Proximity	If you physically distance yourself from the other person, it may indicate that you are uncertain or feel your space is being invaded. If you stand too close, it may make the other person feel uncomfortable.
Posture	A straight and open posture can imply interest or confidence. In contrast, it may suggest a lack of empathy or confidence if you have your arms crossed or your body is slumped or turned away from the other person.

Communication barriers

A communication barrier is something that stops communication from being effective.

Communication barriers may arise due to differences in language, culture or communication methods. Barriers might also occur due to someone not hearing you properly, missing a visual cue or gesture, misunderstanding your meaning, or because their level of reading or writing skills makes written communication challenging.

There may be a problem with communication if the sender and receiver can't see each other. For example, if communication takes place on the phone there may be distractions, interruptions or body language that cannot be seen.

Email, text messages and social media posts may also have missed visual information. Typing errors, incorrect spelling or grammar and inability to express tone might lead to the information being misunderstood. The person sending the message and the person receiving the message may have a very different understanding of the communication.

By being aware of possible communication barriers, you can remind staff of strategies that support good relationships, such as being polite, showing empathy, and being honest and trustworthy.

Language resources

Some people may need information provided in their first language, particularly when they have to make a decision based on detailed information.

A translator converts spoken or written words from one language into another. Translated information might include client documents, newsletters, forms or records. An interpreter translates speech from one language into another, including from spoken words into sign language.

Translation programs can be found online or as an application for a mobile device. Some programs will translate text to speech, allowing you to hear pronunciation. These programs are great for translating single words or basic phrases.

Multilingual staff members can help to make sure information is communicated and received correctly.

> People who do not speak fluent English may need more time, resources and encouragement.

Having an interpreter in a meeting with a client can help by:
• relaying information, particularly early in the relationship, so you can develop understanding and create a connection • identifying and discussing values, needs and expectations • understanding specific signs or body language that are used to convey needs • understanding how a person is feeling, and explaining their concerns or worries • communicating key information regarding routines and transition times throughout the day.

Other communication resources include basic brochures and signs, communication aids that are targeted to specific groups of people, or resources from particular cultural or ethnic groups.

You may be able to locate these resources from:

- industry-specific organisations such as the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health

- local communities, which may have cultural education hubs for specific cultures in their area, such as libraries or a contact from the local council directory

- the internet, which has resources about particular cultural or ethnic groups, such as support groups, peak bodies and representative groups.

> ## Example
> ## Cross-cultural communication strategies
>
> Emma is a support worker who is meeting a new resident who has recently moved to Australia from Japan. To ensure she is being respectful and not rude, Emma researches Japanese culture prior to meeting with them. Emma discovers that non-verbal communication plays a large role in Japanese culture. Eye contact is considered rude and body language speaks louder than words. Emma decides to study and practise her communication techniques before meeting with Mr Fumio.

Practice Task 7

Question 1

Mary is 25 years old and has cerebral palsy. Her speech is limited and difficult to understand, especially for new communication partners. List three communication aids that could be of assistance to Mary.

Question 2

Identify two types of resources you could access to support effective communication in the workplace.

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

Case study

The workplace leave policy for a residential disability service states the following:

'When a single parent's child is ill she can request leave to stay at home and care for her child. She can also take the child to a general practitioner, and if he provides the child with a medical certificate the staff member can use that day as part of her own sick leave. The staff member must consult with her manager so that he can authorise the appropriate leave.'

Question 3

Give one example of exclusive language used in the case study.

Question 4

Reword the policy statement so that the language is inclusive.

3B

Tailor communication strategies for people with different needs

To communicate effectively, you need to think about the specific needs of the person or group receiving the message.

Information you provide to staff would be quite different from the information you provide to clients or the wider community. Tailoring information for different target groups means asking yourself some questions:

- What is the purpose of the information?
- Where will the target group find or access the information?
- What tone is appropriate to the communication (practical, professional, fun, etc.)?
- What mix of text and visuals will work best?
- What information is most important?
- How can I make my message easy/easier to understand?

Clear communication

Direct communication can be defined as a clear message that minimises the chance of misinterpretation.

This is a challenge as each type of communication requires different actions. Use direct communication with people who need clear instructions. For example, the sentence 'Please move from position A to position B immediately', is direct communication. The instruction cannot be misunderstood.

Indirect communication is open to interpretation and can be taken in different ways by different people. People who communicate indirectly tend to use body language, silences/pauses, tone and/or act out their needs instead of being direct and verbalising what they want or need.

When a language barrier exists, you may use simple words and accompany these with gestures or body language.

Tips for using clear communication
• Make sure you have the person's attention.
• Provide a suitable environment to talk, such as a quiet and private area.
• Use words that the person can understand, considering their age, language background, abilities and culture.
• Use clear, specific and relevant words and avoid slang or abbreviated terms.
• Speak to the person directly.
• Use sentences that are easy to follow and interpret.
• Use active listening – in other words, listen attentively to their response and restate or paraphrase it to check that you have understood.
• If they don't understand you, work out what the issue is. Have they not heard you? Have they not understood the words? Do your best to remedy the situation.
• Ask if the person needs more information.
• Use body language, words and a tone of voice that match and try to avoid giving mixed messages.
• If communication barriers still exist, seek permission to ask for assistance from their friends or family members.

Communication resources

When presenting information, consider the specific needs of the audience you are targeting.

Every person will have a preferred way of processing and understanding information. Communication involves more than just speaking and writing. It should include opportunities for two-way interaction, listening, exchanging ideas, consultation and negotiation, as well as nonverbal communication.

When presenting information or asking people for their opinion, consider their needs and personal preferences as far as possible. There are many ways to gather information from people and present it to a person or group. Here are some options to consider.

Delivering information to be listened to	
• Discussions • Meetings • Face-to-face training sessions	• Webinars • Online meetings or web conferences • Recordings or podcasts

Delivering information to be read	
• Books • Websites • Fact sheets • Emails • Brochures or pamphlets • Noticeboards	• Posters • Reports or documents • Maps • Charts • Checklists

Delivering information to be acted on	
• Face-to-face training sessions • Demonstrations • Checklists	• Diagrams using symbols • Role-plays • Case studies and scenarios

Example
Observing body language

Elise wants to make all clients feel welcome every day. She likes to approach the clients as they arrive and speak to them individually. Over time, she has identified the best body language to use with each client. One of her strategies is to watch their body language and then copy it.

One of the clients, Renée, has touched Elise on the arm before, so Elise knows that touching is acceptable for her.

Lauren, another client, steps back a little if Elise moves in close. She also doesn't make eye contact. However, they have great conversations and Lauren is happy to share lots of stories about herself. Elise knows to keep a little distance between them and not to make eye contact with her.

Practice Task 8

Question 1

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

a. A direct communication statement would be, 'Meet me on the corner of Queen and Bourke streets at 9am tomorrow'.	Yes / No
b. Indirect communication would be a statement like, 'It might be nice to meet at the tree around lunchtime'.	Yes / No
c. Use sign language, writing or miming when communicating to groups who speak English as second a language.	Yes / No
d. Clear communication involves adjusting your tone, using body language, and avoiding using jargon and idioms.	Yes / No
e. Allowances are not required for different groups if the same information is being communicated on several occasions.	Yes / No

3C Reflect on the use of communication strategies

Reflecting on what worked and what didn't work in communication will support you to become an effective communicator.

No matter who you are communicating with, you should take time to reflect on the communication and consider what worked well and what you could do better. Misunderstandings can occur when information has not been received in the way it was intended. Something went wrong in the process and the communicator would do well to reflect on what could be improved.

Using a reflective cycle is one way to examine and monitor communication strategies. You can follow these steps yourself and encourage others to reflect on the effectiveness of their communication. You could record your reflections in a journal or other document and/or discuss them with a colleague.

Reflect on your communication strategies	
1	**Description** Think of a recent incident where you were communicating with a socially and/or culturally diverse person or group. What happened?
2	**Feelings** When you were communicating with this person or group, what were you feeling and thinking? Do you have a sense of what they were feeling and thinking?
3	**Analysis** What did and did not work in your communication?
4	**Evaluation** Do you think that the communication strategy you used was effective?
5	**Conclusion** What conclusion could you draw about the situation to take into future scenarios?
6	**Action** If you had the opportunity to communicate with this person again in the same situation, what would you do differently? Why?

Use feedback to reflect on communication strategies

Feedback helps people to improve their understanding and performance.

It is not always easy to give and receive feedback, however it can be extremely useful and supports us all to improve. When someone gives you feedback on your communication skills, it gives you the opportunity to reflect on the situation and identify ways to improve. Feedback on the effectiveness of your communication, or the communication of the service, may come via a formal channel such as a survey or questionnaire to staff or clients. It may also come informally, such as in a conversation or by observing the way people behave during a conversation.

When giving feedback to others, consider the following:

Tips on giving feedback
Make it a positive experience Be positive. If you are giving feedback, deliver it in a pleasant way that enables others to learn. If you are receiving feedback, accept it as a positive way for you to learn.
Be timely Feedback is most effective when shared soon after an event. Make sure the feedback discussion occurs when it is convenient.
Make it regular Set periods of time for revisiting feedback and reviewing any goals. Goals can get lost in the day-to-day work you do, so make specific times to discuss and review them.
Prepare your comments Think about what you want to say or talk about. Be reflective and clear. Make notes, if needed, so that you remember the important points.
Consider the location Use a space that is comfortable and private, especially if the feedback is personal and important. Make sure you have the other person's full attention and try to avoid interruptions.
Avoid blaming and shaming 'You' statements take the form of finger-pointing, so feedback should include 'I' statements. For example, instead of saying, 'You don't seem to see the importance of greeting each client individually', try saying, 'I think it is important to greet all clients'.
Allow input Encourage the other person to respond, offer ideas or explain their understanding of the situation.

Tips on giving feedback
Include positives Include praise and encouragement. Mention positives, not just negatives. Look at feedback as something that identifies where things can be improved, rather than where things are wrong or incorrect. Everyone can improve in some way.
Provide suggestions and follow up Everyone needs support and follow up. Suggestions may range from ideas on what to do next to professional development opportunities. Set clear times and dates for follow up. If goals are set and then forgotten, the process is of little value.

Identify areas of improvement

Focus on improving your communication skills and, where possible, take note of how respected colleagues communicate.

Communication skills in need of improvement might be:

- dealing with conflict or difficult situations
- making the first contact with an unfamiliar person
- giving instructions
- listening
- interpreting body language
- talking to people who have difficulty communicating
- giving and receiving feedback
- clear writing.

Practice Task 9

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

Case study

Sanjet is meeting with the supervisor of a residential respite service to discuss his needs as he will soon be attending for a few weekends of respite. He does not speak English, but he has a relative who does. They have arranged for this family member to act as his interpreter during the interview. Unfortunately, Sanjet becomes agitated and upset during the discussion. It turns out that there is friction between the family members and the information was not being communicated in the way it was intended.

Question 1

Provide feedback on the effectiveness of the communication strategy used.

Question 2

What could the supervisor have done to ensure Sanjet was communicated with appropriately?

Summary

- When you use biased language, you give the message that you value people differently based on their gender, race, age, economic status, sexual orientation, religion or other personal characteristic.

- Instead, use welcoming, inclusive language and put your opinions and judgments to the side.

- Negotiation, conflict resolution, teamwork and the completion of work tasks all rely on communication skills.

- Several factors can impact on communication, including those related to cultural differences such as attitudes, values, assumptions, stereotypes and the environment.

- By being aware of possible communication barriers, you can use strategies that help to establish relationships, such as being polite, showing empathy, being honest and maintaining confidence.

- Make use of resources targeted to specific groups of people, or resources from particular cultural or ethnic groups.

- When presenting information or asking people for their opinions, consider their personal preferences and needs where you can.

- Self-reflection is an important aspect of communication; no matter who you are communicating with, consider what went well and what could be improved.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Adapt communication strategies

Part A

1. A sign at a rehabilitation centre reads 'We welcome all women into our yoga class.' Explain why this is exclusive language and how it could be modified to be inclusive.

2. Briefly describe how you would modify your presentation of research data regarding health in older people, if your audience was a group of older people instead of a group of research scientists.

3. We can communicate with each other in many different ways. If you had a group of people who spoke a variety of different languages, none of them English, how could you communicate to them the location of the toilet in a community centre?

Part B

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

Case study

You have been asked to explain the newly modified diversity policy at a session at an organisation-wide planning day. The planning day is to take place in another state and travel and accommodation are provided. There will be up to 25 participants, including representatives from the board of management, managers, admin staff and support workers from various centres across Australia. The participants will represent a diverse group of people, who speak a range of languages and who have had a variety of professional and personal experiences with cultural diversity.

1. Identify the purpose and describe the target group for your communication. Briefly explain why this is important to consider.

2. List two sources you could go to for information and advice on how to communicate to your audience.

3. Provide two options for ways you could present information to the group.

4. Identify two things you need to keep in mind when planning to communicate to a diverse group.

5. Identify how you could adapt your presentation's communication strategy to incorporate input from an expert in developing cultural competence.
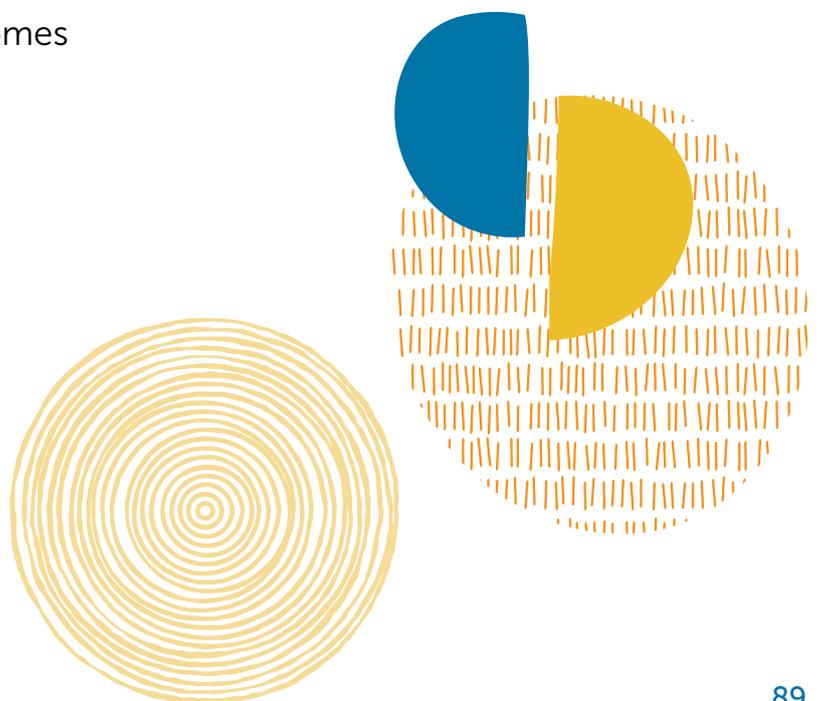
6. How could you determine if your communication strategies were effective? Why is this important?

Topic 4: Contribute to workplace diversity policies and procedures

4A Develop diversity strategies

4B Evaluate and report on outcomes

4A Develop diversity strategies

As a manager or supervisor, you will need to be aware of all policies and procedures.

An organisation must consider diversity in the workplace when developing and reviewing policies and procedures. Your role may be to communicate and consult with key target groups to collect information about their needs and incorporate it into diversity policies and procedures.

A diversity policy represents the objectives and values of the organisation. For a policy to be meaningful and practical, it requires input from its key stakeholders, so diversity practices can be embedded in the workplace in a way that will best suit its operations.

Providers of community services in Australia must meet their legal obligations and adhere to the regulations of their industry. Legal requirements and the standards expected of the community service industry are reflected in the policies developed by each organisation.

Policy and procedural documents are works in progress and require review and updating on a regular basis. This may occur when there is:

- a change in legislation, such as new anti-discrimination laws

- an emerging need or change in the industry, such as funding changes within the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or the Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC)

- an identified risk to the organisation, such as a need to review equal opportunity or language in position descriptions

- a change that means the policy is no longer workable, such as the business doubling in size as a result of a merger to a larger company

- an identified gap in the policy i.e., some information is missing or is not robust enough.

Procedures outline the specific work practices required to implement a policy. A procedure that accompanies a policy will also require regular updating as job roles change or new staff are employed.

For example, a diversity policy may include a section on program delivery in which a new anti-bias approach is to be applied when planning programs. The procedures that accompany the policy would include steps to follow, such as:

- making sure planning programs promote diverse cultural practices

- ensuring the programs allow for the participation of all clients.

Diversity strategies

All organisations must adhere to the principles of diversity and equity.

All community service organisations should adopt diversity strategies and have policies and procedures that promote and protect diversity.

Under Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation, an employer may be held legally responsible for any discrimination or harassment that occurs in the workplace or in connection with a person's employment, unless it can be shown that all reasonable steps have been taken to reduce this liability.

Usually, a team of people work together to develop a diversity policy that can guide the organisation to plan and implement diversity strategies. For example, if a diversity objective is to have a diverse workforce that is representative of the local community, then the employment and recruitment procedures and practices would reflect this objective. The processes of advertising for new staff, interviewing, selection and employment of staff would encourage community service workers with different characteristics of diversity, including culture, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation, to apply. The language used in an employment advertisement for a position in the organisation would be attractive to a diverse range of applicants.

> To see an example of a workplace inclusion strategy, see the Department of Human Services 'Every story counts, 2019–2023': aspirelr.link/dhs-every-story-counts

Consulting with others

Stakeholders in an organisation can be broadly defined as anyone who has an interest in or interacts with an organisation. Stakeholders can be internal (such as staff and management) or external (such as clients, clients' families, local community groups or representatives, consultants and industry associations).

> Consultation is the action of seeking the opinions and concerns of others.

Everyone who is affected by a policy (either directly or indirectly), should be consulted when developing a policy or reviewing an existing one. The number and range of stakeholders will differ according to the size of the service and level of interaction with the community. For example, a small regional disability service may have a large number of clients who are supported by the service, and the interactions with other community organisations and services may be extensive. This could include clients, local cultural groups, disability support staff and volunteers.

Consultations aim to collect valuable, valid and honest responses. Some consultation methods are more suitable for certain groups than others; for example, it is unlikely that parents or carers would be well represented at a daytime information session.

Method of consultation	Description	Pros	Cons
Surveys and opinion polls	• Can be face-to-face interviews, surveys conducted by phone, online or on paper. The same set of questions is used for every person surveyed • Can include open and closed question styles • An incentive can be used to encourage responses, such as entering a prize draw	• Quantitative information can be obtained if a wide group of people is surveyed • Can be relatively cheap to organise and run • Responses are more likely to be based on individual opinions than guided by the group	• Can have low response rates • Information gathered can be superficial and the reasons behind an opinion may not always be clear • Closed questions mean there will be little explanation for why people responded the way they did
Focus groups /workshops	• A small number of people, such as staff or clients (or both) who have been asked for their opinions on the topic • May require a note-taker to record the responses	• Good quality qualitative information can be captured • Allows in-depth discussion of issues and potential resolution of problems • Face-to-face contact ensures participants can be given further explanation of the issues and their opinions can be obtained	• A relatively small number of people are usually involved, meaning that information gathered cannot be assumed to be representative • Groups may not represent the majority opinion • Can be difficult to get people to be involved and offer their time
Meetings with key target groups	• May include meetings with staff or a sample of clients	• Allows specific groups to be targeted • Face-to-face contact ensures participants can be given further explanation of the issues	• Time available for discussion may be limited • Topic may not be of interest to participants

Method of consultation	Description	Pros	Cons
Individual interviews and meetings	• One-on-one interviews to discuss details on specific issues	• Meeting location can be flexible • Allows for in-depth discussion and understanding of issues	• Likely to be very focused on individual issues • Time-consuming to conduct • Little quantitative information gathered and not majority opinion

Components of a diversity policy

A diversity policy should be relevant to the specific workplace and have the endorsement of the managers, supervisors and board of management.

The policy should begin with a framing statement on diversity that affirms the organisation's philosophy and values. A diversity policy that focuses on staff may cover areas such as:

• hiring and promoting staff (recruitment)

• allocating tasks

• staff activities where diversity practices can be embedded

• training offered to staff

• a statement on (zero tolerance for harassment and discrimination.

A final version of a policy document can be distributed to stakeholders involved in its development for review and feedback. The document may include supporting documentation, such as the service's code of conduct. It may also refer to other relevant policies, the procedural documents related to the policy such as the complaints procedure, and a timeline for actions.

Components of a diversity policy
• Scoping statement that outlines the key personnel, issues and context for the organisation
• Purpose statement or objectives that explain the intent of the policy and what the organisation hopes to achieve
• Compliance with specific legal requirements, such as Acts and regulations
• Definitions or terminology used in the policy, such as 'discrimination', 'inclusion' etc.
• Performance indicators that will be used to measure the effectiveness of outcomes against the objectives

Components of a diversity policy
• Activities and strategies to achieve the objectives as well as time frames and associated costs
• Roles and responsibilities required to carry out key tasks and duties
• Record-keeping processes that explain how the policy will be stored and where it can be found
• Evaluation processes that explain how the policy will be reviewed and improved over time

Example
Introduction to a diversity policy

Here is an example of an introduction or opening statement to a diversity policy.

Philosophy

We believe in having a workforce that comprises people from a range of backgrounds and of varying ages, genders, abilities and outlooks. We believe that our organisation will prosper and grow by effectively utilising staff and their full range of capabilities and by valuing their contributions. The organisation will ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated fairly and equally, and in accordance with relevant Commonwealth and state/territory legislation.

Policy application

- All employees have the right to a safe and healthy workplace free from discrimination and harassment.
- Selection and recruitment, training, promotion and leave must be based on a person's individual ability regardless of their human characteristics. Recruitment should reflect the Australian community and include people of different abilities, ages, genders, cultures and religions.
- Leave may be given for cultural and religious events if prior notice of four weeks is provided. This will be based on individual circumstances and be at the manager's discretion.
- Maternity, paternity and carers leave is offered (see leave policy).
- Leave may be given for other reasons. This will be based on individual circumstances and be at the manager's discretion (see leave policy).
- Employees must follow organisational policies and procedures and work cooperatively, fairly, respectfully and without bias or prejudice.
- The CEO will handle breaches of the policy.

Example
A manager contributes to an organisation's diversity policy

Sue, a manager in a community-based, not-for-profit organisation, attends a meeting of a local council information group for community service workers. Today they have a guest speaker who discusses information published by the state's EEO commission on the way services can work with refugees.

Returning to work after the meeting, Sue explains what she learned to the other managers. They decide that the staff would benefit from the information, presented as a professional development opportunity.

Feedback from staff after the session indicates that the information was useful, and that they would like another session to discuss ideas for changes to programs. They would like to involve refugee families more in the way they design and implement social programs for them. The staff would also like to help them to feel more of a part of the wider community.

The team develops a range of brochures on the value of families' contributions to a range of social programs and has them translated into several community languages.

The CEO makes a point of congratulating Sue on her contribution and acknowledges this in the weekly staff email.

Advocating for diversity strategies

Managers can make valuable contributions in the development and implementation of diversity strategies.

These include:

- reinforcing the policy's key messages whenever possible and applicable

- knowing the legislation and regulations that direct and underpin the compliance requirements of the community service industry

- being able to offer advice, coach and mentor their staff including referring them to relevant information and resources

- encouraging workplace behaviours that demonstrate diversity practices, and modelling these in their interactions with others

- helping others apply a diversity policy into workplace practices.

Advocating for the implementation of the policy

Stakeholders connected with the organisation need to be kept up to date with the status of the diversity policy.

The amount of information and the numbers of people involved will vary. For example, volunteers may only need to be aware of the existence of the diversity statement and the aims of the policy; whereas staff who are required to apply the policy require a detailed explanation and/or training. Information needs to be tailored to group requirements.

Here are some examples of different forums that can be used to communicate diversity strategies and to reinforce the organisation's commitment to diversity.

Induction programs
Direct new staff to the diversity policy and clarify the organisation's aims and practices and the responsibilities for diversity as a part of their job role. A copy of the policy should be included in the organisation's policies and procedures manual as part of the induction kit. Retain records of attendance and who has completed the training to show that the organisation has taken a proactive stance in promoting the policy and eliminating discrimination, anti-bias behaviour etc.

Staff meetings
Use staff meetings to explain aspects of the policy and how it should be implemented. Raise issues and discuss hypothetical incidents, with the aim of educating staff about their responsibilities in relation to diversity. For example, you may explain what sexual harassment means, define bullying, instigate a discussion with a team member about how a policy may be implemented in their team, and describe what to do if they have a complaint about an aspect of diversity. You can invite a guest speaker to talk about the benefits of diversity or provide examples of communication skills for interacting with specific cultural groups.

When running training or information sessions on the diversity strategies of the service, consider the following:

Allow for questions	Provide time during a session for people to ask questions such as: • How can I get to know about another person's culture? • What do you mean by the word 'ethnicity'? • Can people ask about my personal living arrangements? Be prepared with answers to questions such as these. A set of frequently asked questions with responses can be provided as a takeaway.

Seek feedback	To confirm that people understand diversity and its benefits, and know how to comply with the policy, you may need to seek feedback by: • asking further questions to clarify any misunderstandings or confusion • providing a survey or questionnaire to gauge their interest in, understanding of and attitude towards diversity • observing them as they go about their tasks.
Ask questions	You may ask questions to ensure the information has been understood such as: • What does 'diversity in the workplace' mean to you? • Why does our organisation have a diversity policy? • What do you have to do to ensure you are meeting the organisation's diversity policy? • Why is it important for an organisation to understand your personal arrangements, such as having children or family members to care for or being a single parent? • What should you do if you feel you are being bullied? • What are the consequences of not complying with the diversity policy?

Example
Incorporating diversity practices into recruitment

Robin, a supervisor, is asked to recruit two support workers for a youth drop-in service. The manager wants the service to have staff that reflect the diverse demographic in the local community.

Robin reads the organisation's diversity policy, which has an objective that staff should profile the diversity of the drop-in centre's local community. Further research shows that the major languages other than English spoken by the clients at the service are Turkish, Arabic and Croatian.

When advertising for new support worker positions, a statement is included stating that applications would be welcome from support workers who speak one or more of these languages.

Practice Task 10

Question 1

Give two examples of items organisations should consider when developing and documenting diversity strategies with stakeholders.

Question 2

Which of the following statements relate to strategies for a diversity policy? Tick all that apply.

❑ Policies need to be reviewed or updated when gaps are noted or they are unworkable.

❑ External stakeholders include staff, community newspapers and clients.

❑ One-on-one interviews with staff is a preferred consultation method because it is cheap, quick and easy to create.

❑ Definitions of relevant diversity language help define the scope of the policy.

❑ Other documents listed in the policy may include related policies and procedures.

Question 3

Provide three ways to advocate for diversity strategies.

4B Evaluate and report on outcomes

To ensure diversity policies are current and effective, they need to be updated regularly.

Part of the strategy to support diversity includes evaluating the diversity policy, procedures and any other actions that have been taken by the organisation.

Staff can provide valuable feedback on the relevance and usability of policies and procedures used to implement diversity strategies.

A schedule for review should be set with review dates projected into the coming year at least. For example, policies may be reviewed six-monthly or yearly – or if a change arises that means they need to be done earlier. Policy documents should have version information in the footer, or in the file path where they are saved, to ensure only the latest version is used.

The review process should analyse whether the outcomes have been met and the objectives reached. A set of measurable outcomes may be used to determine the success or otherwise of a diversity strategy. For example, has it resulted in positive changes in the workplace?

An evaluation may look at:

- the extent to which the policy has been accessed by staff, such as number of downloads from an intranet

- the number of staff who have been inducted on the policy or attended training on diversity topics

- the currency and relevance of the policy with respect to:

  - legislation changes

  - organisational restructures

  - its readability and usability

  - alignment with other policies (benchmarking).

Measures of success could be:

- observations of communications and interactions between staff in their day-to-day work

- data gathered from staff or other stakeholders from consultations, interviews, meetings or focus groups, about their understanding of diversity concepts

- data on the profiles of employed staff with respect to age, gender and ethnicity, and comparing this diversity over time

- the frequency of discussions about diversity during team meetings and check-in meetings

- results from satisfaction surveys completed by staff or clients

- reductions in the frequency or level of seriousness of reported incidents

- positive feedback from staff on the diversity policy and procedures regarding their readability and ease to follow

- the number of staff activities that involve celebrating or recognising cultural diversity

- gauging the level of enthusiasm for implementing diversity strategies compared to when the policy was first released.

Suggestions to improve the policy

Findings from the evaluation and any recommendations can be provided in a report to stakeholders.

Reports can include statistics (quantitative data) or results of interviews and discussions (qualitative data).

A report may include the following discussion items:

- references to current legislation – anti-discrimination, equal opportunity and human rights

- the changing needs of the service, staff, clients and other stakeholders

- key areas in the service where the strategies are directed

- the use of unbiased and inclusive language

- collaboration with clients or external cultural organisations.

Some common recommendations about the policy might be:

- the language needs to be made clearer

- definitions of terms need to be updated

- it was too ambitious and consequently unrealistic; it needs to be scaled back

- it needs to more closely reflect the capabilities of the service

- it was not ambitious enough, in that targets have been easily met before deadlines; it should be updated to include stretch goals

- it needs to incorporate a new initiative

- it should be promoted beyond the service to the local community

- it requires input from a cultural organisation.

Example
Embracing diversity in the service

A new manager with a strong commitment to diversity initiates a review of the service's diversity policy.

The following steps are included in the review process:

- Notify staff of a review at a staff meeting.

- Check that the policy reflects current legislation.

- Check when diversity training was last conducted.

- Interview staff using a questionnaire to check their knowledge of the diversity policy and understanding of their responsibilities, including how to access the policy documents.

- Check that supporting documents, such as the code of ethics, are mentioned and that they align with the diversity policy.

- Run some activities to promote diversity and get the staff re-engaged and enthusiastic about the strategies.

- Research best practice examples of policies from community service peak body websites and through relevant networks.

After this review, the policy is revised and then endorsed by the senior management, supervisors and staff, and a copy of the updated policy is displayed in the reception area and staffroom. Clients are notified about the review and its location for their comments.

Practice Task 11

Question 1

List three ways to evaluate how well staff are complying with diversity policies and procedures.

Question 2

Which of the following statements about evaluating a diversity policy are correct?
Tick all that apply.

❑ Graphs are a useful way of presenting quantitative data.

❑ You can tell a policy is working if staff begin to complain more about
discrimination.

❑ Services must engage an external expert to review and report on their diversity
policy.

❑ Staff responses to a policy are critical because they must follow the policy and its
procedures.

❑ If the objectives of a policy are too ambitious it can be adjusted to better reflect
the capabilities of the service.

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

Case study

Recently, the manager of an organisation that supports disadvantaged
women resigned and a new manager was appointed. Part of the new
manager's role is to review the policies and procedures of the service.

It becomes obvious that there has been little or no review of the diversity
policy since it was first written. Much of the terminology is outdated and
the legislation listed in the document is not current. The new manager
undertakes a review of the diversity policy and writes a report for the board
and senior managers.

Question 3

List three kinds of information the manager should include in the report about the
work done to update the policy.

Summary

- For a diversity policy to be meaningful, it must reflect the needs of its key stakeholders and indicate how the organisation intends to embed diversity practices in the workplace.

- Policies and procedures are works in progress and require regular review and updating to ensure they are current and meet the needs of staff and clients.

- The development and review of diversity strategies should involve consultation with key stakeholders.

- Measuring the success of a policy means collecting data and analysing the results to see if the objectives and outcomes have been met.

- Determining the success of diversity strategies involves evaluating information gathered through consultation to determine the level of understanding and acceptance of the policy.

- Staff can provide valuable feedback and suggestions that ensure the policy is implemented effectively and efficiently, and maintains currency.

- A summary report can identify suggested amendments and recommendations, such as making the language clearer or defining some of the terminology more precisely.
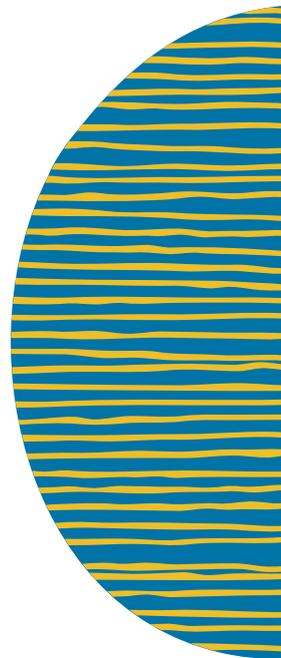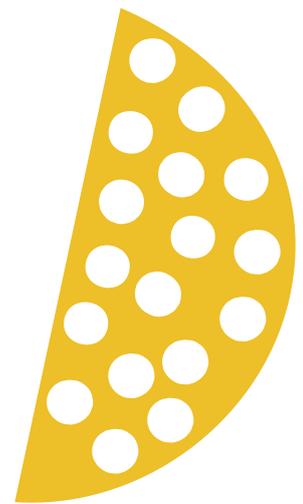
Learning Checkpoint 4

Contribute to workplace diversity policies and procedures

Part A

1. Which of the following statements about developing diversity strategies and policies is correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. The strategy should include how the needs of the organisation, staff and clients were identified and evaluated.	Yes / No
b. The language should not be complex, and be easy to read and understand.	Yes / No
c. Legislation should be included including laws relating to anti-discrimination, equal opportunity and human rights.	Yes / No
d. Once a diversity policy has been approved, it will not need to be reviewed for years.	Yes / No
e. The diversity strategy should be made available to key stakeholders such as staff, clients and other users of the service.	Yes / No

Part B

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Felicity has been employed as a supervisor for a peer support service. One of her first jobs is to review the diversity strategies and the associated policies and procedures. Straight away she notices the diversity policy doesn't reflect the current legislation and there are no older versions on the schedule to indicate it has been reviewed on a regular basis.

1. Describe who Felicity should consult with about the service's diversity strategies.

2. Give three examples of diversity objectives that should be in place for the organisation.

3. Which of the following should Felicity do while introducing a draft of the policy to staff? Tick all that apply.

❑ Felicity should hold a training session to introduce the draft policy.

❑ Felicity should ensure no staff are on leave while the draft policy is introduced.

❑ Felicity should show how the policy relates to current legislation.

❑ Felicity should explain how staff can provide feedback and recommendations for inclusions into the policy.

❑ Felicity should make all staff provide feedback for the draft policy.

4. What are three ways Felicity could evaluate the success of the strategies she aims to put in place?

5. Once Felicity receives feedback from the stakeholders, she summarises it into a report for senior management. List three things Felicity should outline in her report.

Glossary

Coaching

The training and guidance provided by an experienced person to help a learner achieve their goals.

Code of conduct

A set of rules that informs employees how to act in a workplace.

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 identity

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

Cultural safety

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

Inclusion

Providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or left out.

Mentoring

The sharing of knowledge and skills by an experienced person with a less-experienced person.