Exercise

Culture and Respect
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Purpose:

- To promote discussion about respect and how culture and context impact on how respect is understood and applied
- To link ideas of respect, culture and accountability for acts of violence, at the individual, community and societal levels
- To support a human rights perspective when understanding and responding to family violence.

Materials required:

- Fact Sheet – *Culture and Respect in Indigenous Communities.*

Process:

1. Ask participants to find someone in the room who they do not know or do not work with very closely. Instruct them to introduce themselves to that person and spend five to ten minutes discussing:
   - What does it mean for you to be shown respect?

2. After the allotted time, ask participants to return to their seats and open the discussion to the large group.
   - What ideas did people discuss and what are the practices of respect?
   - What does it mean to generate a Culture of Respect?
   - How difficult might it be to convey or notice respect when there are significant differences between people? (Such as culture; language; gender; sexuality...)

3. The facilitator can record themes on the whiteboard as a way of capturing the key points. If the group is not very forthcoming recording on the whiteboard can often prompt other contributions from participants.

4. The facilitator should ensure that the activity is linked back to the concept of respect, culture, human rights and the unacceptability of acts of violence, irrespective of whether they occur in the home, workplace, or in public settings.
5. The facilitator can also invite the group to consider the following quote by Mick Dodson

“We have no cultural traditions based on humiliation, degradation and violation”

(Mick Dodson, Address to the National Press Club: Violence Dysfunction Aboriginality, June 2003, Canberra.)

Key elements to draw out of the discussion:

- Principles of respect for human dignity are a vital component of a human rights approach to family violence. A human rights approach gives value to cultural diversity but not at the expense of rights to human dignity and respect.

- In all cultures there are values, practices and traditions that facilitate male dominance and oppression of women as well as values that are empowering, respectful and support men’s recognition of women’s self-determination.

  - Culture is never a reason to excuse violence. However, we need to understand culture so that our response to violence is culturally meaningful and effective.

  - Organisational and workplace culture can either promote or block respectful relationships. Federal legislation includes a number of related concepts—respect, courtesy, harassment and diversity—that all relate to the nature of working relationships and workplace culture.

The facilitator may wish to utilise and/or handout the factsheet that is a suggested accompaniment to this exercise.