

# Fact Sheet

## Culture and Respect in Indigenous Communities

**AVERT**  
FAMILY VIOLENCE



**Collaborative Responses in  
the Family Law System**



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## Fact Sheet – Culture and Respect in Indigenous Communities

The 'Cultural Respect Framework' was first prepared by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council's Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Working Party in 2004. (Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, 2004).

The Cultural Respect Framework recognises that it is important to have strategies and initiatives across a range of dimensions:

### ***Knowledge and awareness***

This is the individual cognitive dimension where the focus is on understandings and awareness of the history, experience, culture and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The goal in this dimension is to change attitudes to facilitate changes in behaviour and ensure that all jurisdictions have relevant programs. It is well recognised, however, that influencing attitudes is a complex proposition and programs are focusing now on building stronger links to the action dimension.

### ***Skilled practice and behaviour***

This is the action dimension where the focus is on changed behaviour and practice. Strategies include formal education and training as well as strong performance management processes to encourage good practice and culturally appropriate behaviour. Recognising the legitimacy of traditional health practices and developing culturally appropriate protocols are important strategies in this dimension for health organisations.

### ***Strong (customer and community) relationships***

This is the organisational dimension where the focus is on an agency or institution's business practices upholding and securing the cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The scope includes management of the workforce to ensure a balance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and skilled non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals and workplace management that is sensitive to cultural needs and risk management that reflects cultural differences.

### ***Equity of outcomes***

This is the results dimension where the focus is on the outcomes for individuals and communities. Important strategies include ensuring that there is feedback at the system and organisational levels on relevant key performance indicators and targets, continuous improvement of data and information collection and benchmarking to lift performance.



Other related concepts include 'Cultural Safety'. For example, the VACCA's development of the Aboriginal Cultural Competence Framework for the Victorian Department of Human Services which has been adopted as the official framework for mainstream child and family services in Victoria. It involves the following key concepts:

- The ongoing development of Cultural Awareness as knowledge with understanding
- The recognition of Aboriginal self-determination as the basis for engagement and respectful partnership building
- Cultural respect i.e. the attitude and values of individuals and organisations
- Cultural responsiveness i.e. the necessary ability and skills to interact effectively across cultures
- Which leads to cultural safety, which is concerned with whether or not Aboriginal clients feel 'safe' from covert or overt cultural abuse
- Cross-cultural practice and care i.e. applying the lens of culture to the delivery of services to Indigenous children and youth.