Fact Sheet

Culture and Respect in Indigenous Communities
Copyright

© Commonwealth of Australia 2010

This resource is protected by copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, and those explicitly granted below, all other rights are reserved.

With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and except where otherwise noted, all material presented in this training package is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution-No Derivative Works 3.0 Australia licence http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/3.0/au/legalcode. The terms under which the Coat of Arms can be used are detailed on the It's an Honour website http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au/coat-arms/.

For the avoidance of doubt, this means this licence only applies to material as set out in this training package.

You must include the following link: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/3.0/au/legalcode when re-using or distributing this work so that it is clear to others that the Creative Commons licence applies to this copyright material.

Any reference to, reuse or distribution of all or part of this training package must be attributed in the following way: Australian Attorney-General's Department, AVERT Family Violence: Collaborative Responses in the Family Law System.

Contact us

Inquiries regarding the licence and any use of this resource are welcome at:

Assistant Secretary
Family Law Branch
Attorney-General's Department
3-5 National Circuit
Barton ACT 2600

Disclaimer

The information presented and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government.
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.