

## Cultural Safety Principles – Examples

Best, O. (2017). The cultural safety journey: An Aboriginal Australian nursing and midwifery context. In O. Best & B. Fredericks (Eds.), *Yatdjuligin: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nursing and Midwifery Care* (pp. 46-66). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
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### Reflective Practice

- Recognise that unconscious biases and stereotypes may affect your thoughts and actions irrespective of how egalitarian your conscious attitudes are.
- Reflect on assumptions that are held about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Recognise how values, beliefs and biases inform health professional attitudes, behaviours, and professional practice.
- Undertake a process of reflection on your own cultural identity and recognise the impact that your personal culture has on your professional practice.
- Recognise the way social environments shape your psychological makeup, manifesting as implicit and explicit biases.
- Recognise the need for life-long transformative unlearning in relation to unconscious bias and stereotypes.
- Reflect on the solitude of your own thoughts, realising you will only ever come up with analyses and solutions from our own (biased) frame of reference. This highlights the need for social reflective processes.

### Minimise Power differentials

- Reflect on health professionals' positions of power and privilege within society and health care organizations, and how these influence, usually unconscious, assumptions and comparisons about "Others"
- Recognise the power imbalance between non-Aboriginal health professionals trained in western medicine over Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.
- Recognise that the power which a health professional holds is often unacknowledged, unchallenged and unconscious.
- Reflect on your own power, and role in empowering others
- Consider whether the care provided is *regardful* of culture, or *regardless* of culture, i.e. do I treat all my patients the same, or recognise difference.
- Being mindful of whose values are being valued. Ensure that your own values are not imposed on clients, and if there is conflict with the client's values, that care is not compromised.

### Engagement and Discourse

- Patient centred care – ask the patient what they want, and how they want the service to be provided.
- Invest in the beginning – listen to the reason the client is there.

- Let them finish. Elicit the patient's perspective - this is about asking the patient what they think the problem is, and/or what they think the solution may be.
- Empathy is about showing compassion. It is important to reflect on how the patient may be feeling.
- Demonstrating compassion and concern can contribute to improved health outcomes.
- Develop a partnership with the patient through appropriate support.
- Develop a shared understanding of treatment and treatment while respecting differing cultural beliefs.

### **Decolonisation**

- Recognise that in settler societies like Australia and New Zealand, representations of Indigenous peoples can be traced back to colonial ideologies about Western superiority and Indigenous inferiority. We internalise these associations, which are then reinforced through health services, structures and systems, and education and training.
- Being mindful of the history of colonisation and its ongoing effects in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Possess an understanding of intergenerational trauma.
- Acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices, including language and health beliefs.
- Being mindful of the hierarchical and mainstream nature of health care practices and services, and the structures and systems which operate within them.
- Recognise the importance of Aboriginal health professionals within health services.
- Acknowledge the importance of the family, extended family and community in the context of individual patient care.
- Consider what you may be able to do personally and professionally to decolonise your health practice.

### **Ensure that you do not diminish, demean and disempower others through your actions.**

- This principle represents the overall aim of cultural safety, and is based on the premise that culturally safe actions by the health professional will lead to a more positive experiences and improved health outcomes for patients. Implementing cultural safety principles into practice will require any health professional to engage in a process of transforming their practice through identifying culturally unsafe behaviours, and being willing to engage in discomforting and challenging critical reflection on your own values, attitudes and behaviours
- Ask yourself are my actions empowering or disempowering my patients?
- What are the structures and systems in which health professionals work that can be empowering or disempowering for patients?