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| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework guidelines  Department of Health and Human Services |
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| To receive this publication in an accessible format [email Aboriginal Strategy and Oversight Branch](mailto:aboriginalstrategyandoversight@dhhs.vic.gov.au) < aboriginalstrategyandoversight@dhhs.vic.gov.au>  Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.  © State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, January, 2020.  Where the term ‘Aboriginal’ is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation.  **ISBN** 978-1-76069-141-7 **(pdf/online/MS word)**  Available at:  <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies/aboriginal-health>  <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/funded-agencies/cultural-safety> |
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# Who does this framework apply to?

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework (the framework) has been developed to help the department and mainstream Victorian health, human and community services to create culturally safe environments, services and workplaces for Aboriginal staff, clients, families and communities. <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-cultural-safety-framework>

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework supports *Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017 – 2027* to achieve 'self-determining, healthy and safe Aboriginal communities'.

The framework aims to help the department and mainstream health and community services to strengthen their cultural safety by participating in a process of continuous learning and practice improvement.

It is expected that all department funded service providers establish culturally safe practices across all parts of the organisation to recognise and respect Aboriginal culture and deliver services that meet the needs, expectations and rights of Aboriginal patients, their families, and Aboriginal staff.

In addition to ensuring service delivery is safe, service providers are encouraged to undertake an iterative quality improvement process to map, plan and act and review actions for improving Aboriginal cultural safety.

Key elements of culturally safe workplaces and services include:

## Knowledge and respect for self

Awareness of how one's own cultural values, knowledge, skills and attitudes are formed and affect others, including a responsibility to address their unconscious bias, racism and discrimination

## Knowledge of and respect for Aboriginal people

Knowledge of the diversity of Aboriginal peoples, communities and cultures, and the skills and attitudes to work effectively with them

## A commitment to redesigning organisations and systems to reduce racism and discrimination

Strategic and institutional reform to remove barriers to optimal health, wellbeing and safety outcomes for Aboriginal people

## Cultural safety is an ongoing learning journey

An ongoing and responsive learning framework that includes the need to unlearn unconscious bias and racism and relearn Aboriginal cultural values.

The [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-cultural-safety-framework) <*https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-cultural-safety-framework*> is available on [the](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-cultural-safety-framework) Department of Health and Human Services website

Service type, Capital Development Guideline and fire safety certificates

| Expectations | Suggested examples |
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| Organisation’s foundational documents (vision, values, strategic plan) include statements of **commitment to Aboriginal self-determination, culturally competent practice and cultural safety.** | * + - * + Organisational foundational documents such as strategic plans, operational plans and program manuals include strong statements of commitment to self-determination and to meeting social obligations to address inequity, racism and promote cultural safety.         + Organisational documents define a set of values and principles and demonstrate anticipated behaviours, attitudes, policies and structures that will enable the organisation to work effectively cross-culturally with a commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal people.         + Policies and procedures promote Aboriginal peoples’ right to culture and their right to participate in cultural activities within their chosen communities.         + A documented and continuous organisational quality improvement plan is in place for improving the experience of Aboriginal people using services within the organisation |
| Your organisation has **systems in place to recognise and ensure cultural safety for Aboriginal workforce and people accessing services.** | * + - * + Documented reception processes encourage users to identify if they or their children are Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander and for intake staff to ask clients if they or their children identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.         + Documented policies and procedures, such as inclusion and diversity policies and reconciliation action plans, that tackle racism and address potential discrimination against Aboriginal service users and Aboriginal workforce.         + There are documented policies and procedures in place to improve outcomes for Aboriginal clients from diverse backgrounds including those with multiple and complex needs.         + Documented audits or surveys assess whether Aboriginal people (both staff and clients) have experienced racism or discrimination in their engagement with the agency.         + Your organisation acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land at the beginning of meetings and events. |
| Your organisation **engages with Aboriginal people**, their families and the wider community on how to design, deliver and review services based on priorities and needs they identify. | * + - * + Documented systems are in place to ensure that Aboriginal people have inputs into service design and planning. For example, Aboriginal people attend focus groups and quality review meetings to provide feedback, and developing MOUs with Aboriginal Organisations         + Feedback is documented and incorporated into revised service responses, governance and policies where appropriate.         + Cultural safety plans are developed in partnership with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations or community representatives. |
| Your organisation has a **training strategy** that addresses the need for ongoing training and professional development in cultural awareness, cultural safety and cultural competency. | * + - * + A training strategy is developed or adjusted to include cultural awareness, cultural safety and cultural competency training.         + Compulsory cultural awareness, safety and competency training is provided to all levels of the organisation from Board, Senior Management, and Team Leader to service delivery staff.         + Agreements with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations are developed for providing training in local Aboriginal protocols, agreements and frameworks to ensure cultural safety. |
| Your organisation **monitors and evaluates cultural safety** within your organisation. | * + - * + There is a Cultural Safety Action Plan and review which shows progress in the organisation that ranges from awareness to capability.         + A documented and continuous quality-improvement process is in place for assessing, monitoring and enhancing the cultural safety of the service environment. This may include existing performance measures.         + Organisation works with Aboriginal organisations to ensure that cultural safety commitments and cultural competency requirements are assessed by Aboriginal people and organisations. |
| The service provides a culturally safe and **welcoming physical environmen**t for Aboriginal people. | * + - * + Internal and outside spaces are welcoming, contain formal acknowledgement and culturally appropriate pamphlets and health information.         + Receptionists are provided with training that highlights the unique and important role they play in welcoming Aboriginal children and families to the organisation and the importance of respectful face-to-face and over-the-phone contact and use of respectful language. |
| Your organisation **partners with Aboriginal organisations and communities** in your service area and the programs and activities they provide. | * + - * + Organisational documents reflect knowledge and understanding of local Aboriginal community organisations, people, their culture, practices, protocols and historical connections.         + Referrals to Aboriginal organisational program areas are always encouraged and discussed with clients.         + The organisation demonstrates a commitment to celebratory cultural events, and participates in activities such as NAIDOC, Reconciliation Week, Sorry Day, Mabo Day, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day.         + Organisation conduct events and activities in partnership with Aboriginal community members and Aboriginal community- controlled organisations. |
| Your organisation’s workforce strategy includes **a commitment to employ Aboriginal people in the organisation**. | * + - * + A workforce strategy outlines a target to employing Aboriginal people and that also includes measures for identifying training and developmental pathways and career progression opportunities. Targets should be applicable for not just identified positions but all positions across the organisation.         + The recruitment/HR department has undertaken cultural safety training to ensure the recruitment and interview processes are culturally appropriate and safe for Aboriginal applicants. |