

Fact Sheet:

How to create a culturally competent workplace



Ageing
Australia



Fronitha Care
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ADVANCING WELLBEING



What is cultural competence?

Cultural competence is the ability to interact respectfully and effectively in diverse cultural settings. It involves understanding and reflecting on your own cultural values and perspectives, considering how they influence your actions, and making thoughtful, respectful choices. At its core, cultural competence is about appreciating diversity and the creativity it brings to society.

How to create a culturally competent workplace

Building person-centred relationships

Building rapport and person-centred relationships with other staff, clients and their families is critical to delivering culturally competent care. This requires efforts from individual staff and organisational support. While not always easy, managing cultural conflicts and misunderstandings is essential.

What can individual staff do?



Start with self-reflection

- Why do you want to be culturally competent? Your motivation may come from experiences with other cultures, travel, a commitment to social justice, or connections to multicultural communities.
- Remember these motivations as you navigate the demands and emotional toll of cross-cultural work.

Practice reciprocity

In your attitude:

- Take a broad-minded approach to your client's cultural background.
- Consider how your own culture influences how you care for your client.
- Learn about your client's languages, customs, religious beliefs, and practices.

In your communication:

- Use respectful language and speech.
- Show care through non-verbal communication.
- Maintain open body language.
- Share meaningful items and possessions.
- Create a safe physical environment.

Remember: Not all staff-client relationships will be reciprocal, but they must always be respectful.

What can organisations do?

Organisations must be committed to becoming culturally competent. This requires more than words - it demands action and dedication.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Use professional interpreters to communicate effectively with non-English speaking clients.
- Value multilingual workers to improve access for diverse clients and families.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT

- Hire staff that reflect the community's diversity.
- Provide cultural competence training for all staff, including reception staff.
- Offer culturally relevant education and resources.
- Deliver anti-discrimination and diversity management training.

ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

- Establish clear policies and protocols to address discriminatory behaviour.
- Develop and implement strategies to address discrimination.
- Promote diversity and inclusion across the organisation.
- Include cultural diversity as a regular agenda item in meetings.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Network with other organisations to build community connections.
- Liaise with local communities to destigmatise aged care and enhance credibility.
- Collaborate with external services to provide holistic care, as no single organisation can meet all client needs.

LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

- Ensure management and senior leaders actively participate in cultural events.



Steps to take action

1. Conduct a cultural competence audit of your organisation.
2. Develop a comprehensive cultural competence plan.
3. Provide ongoing training and education for all staff.
4. Engage with diverse communities to build trust and credibility.
5. Regularly review and update policies and practices to ensure inclusivity.

Benefits of cultural competence

- Enhanced client satisfaction and trust.
- Improved access to services for diverse populations.
- A more inclusive and innovative workplace.
- Stronger community relationships and credibility.



Celebrating diversity
in aged care



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