

# **TRAINEE WORKBOOK**

**SHOW SOCIAL AND CULTURAL  
SENSITIVITY**

**SITXCOM002**



**HOSPITALITY GROUP TRAINING**

## ELEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Communicate with customers and colleagues from diverse backgrounds</p> | <p>1.1 Respect customers and colleagues from different social and cultural groups and treat them with respect and sensitivity.</p> <p>1.2 Consider social and cultural differences in all verbal and non verbal communication.</p> <p>1.3 Respond to others in a non-discriminatory way.</p> <p>1.4 Make attempts to overcome language barriers.</p> <p>1.5 Seek help with communication when necessary</p>  |
| <p>2. Address cross cultural misunderstandings.</p>                          | <p>2.1 Identify social and cultural issues that may cause conflict or misunderstanding in the workplace</p> <p>2.2 Address difficulties and seek assistance from others when necessary</p> <p>2.3 Consider social and cultural differences when difficulties or misunderstandings occur</p> <p>2.4 Make efforts to resolve misunderstandings, taking account of social and cultural considerations</p> <p>2.5 Escalate problems and unresolved issues to appropriate supervisor or manager for follow up</p> |

## FOUNDATION SKILLS

Skill	Description
Reading	Understand workplace anti-discrimination policies and plain English documents produced by government information agencies
Oral communication	Discuss cross-cultural misunderstandings and difficulties with supervisors, managers and other team members and identify possible strategies to resolve them

### PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE

Evidence of the ability to complete tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit in the context of the job role, and:

- Communicate in a non-discriminatory way with colleagues and customers from at least three difference social and cultural groups:
  - Demonstrating attempts to overcome language barriers
  - Communicating in line with appropriate social and cultural conventions
  - Demonstrating respect and sensitivity
- Identify when assistance is required in the above communication, and seek help using the appropriate channels.

### KNOWLEDGE EVIDENCE

Demonstrated knowledge required to complete the tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit:

- key principles of fairness and equity in relation to interaction with colleagues and customers
- key cultural and religious protocols of main social and cultural groups in Australian society, including Australian Indigenous people
- key cultural and religious protocols of main inbound tourist markets to Australia
- different types of disability and their implications for the workplace
- anti-discrimination policies for the industry and specific organisation
- basic aspects of state, territory and commonwealth laws covering anti-discrimination, including requirements to:
  - treat customers and colleagues fairly and equitably
  - not discriminate, show partiality or grant any special favours on the basis of social and cultural attributes
  - not threaten, humiliate or intimidate people because of their social or cultural attributes
- sources of assistance in communicating with colleagues and customers from diverse social and cultural groups:
  - government agencies
  - diplomatic services
  - disability advocacy groups
  - educational institutions
  - interpreter services
  - local cultural organisations
- approaches to overcoming language barriers in the workplace:
  - communicating through the use of:
    - gestures
    - signs
    - simple words in English or the other person's language
  - giving simple directions
  - giving simple instructions.

## WHAT IS CULTURAL AWARENESS AND WHY DO YOU NEED IT?

In simple terms, cultural awareness is about realising that not all people are the same. It is about knowing that different people have different values, different behaviours, and sometimes fundamentally different approaches to life.

So why do we need to be 'culturally aware'?

Perhaps the most important reason we all need to be culturally aware is because awareness and knowledge is a first step to understanding. Watching a game of football is much more rewarding if you know the rules of the game! A friendship where you know and understand the other person is more satisfying than a superficial first meeting with a stranger. It's the same with cultural awareness - the more we know and understand, the more we gain from our relationships with people from all cultures.

Wherever you live and work in Australia today you will be in constant contact with people from a huge range of cultural backgrounds. In the Tourism and Hospitality Industry this includes both co-workers and customers.

This means that you will be in constant contact with people who may choose to live their lives differently from the way you do!

Here are a few suggested definitions which will start to give you a feel for what we mean by 'culture' in this unit.

Culture could be defined as:

*"A person's heritage and world view"*

*"The customs and civilisation of a particular people or group"*

*"A binding force which enables a group of people to identify themselves as 'us'"*

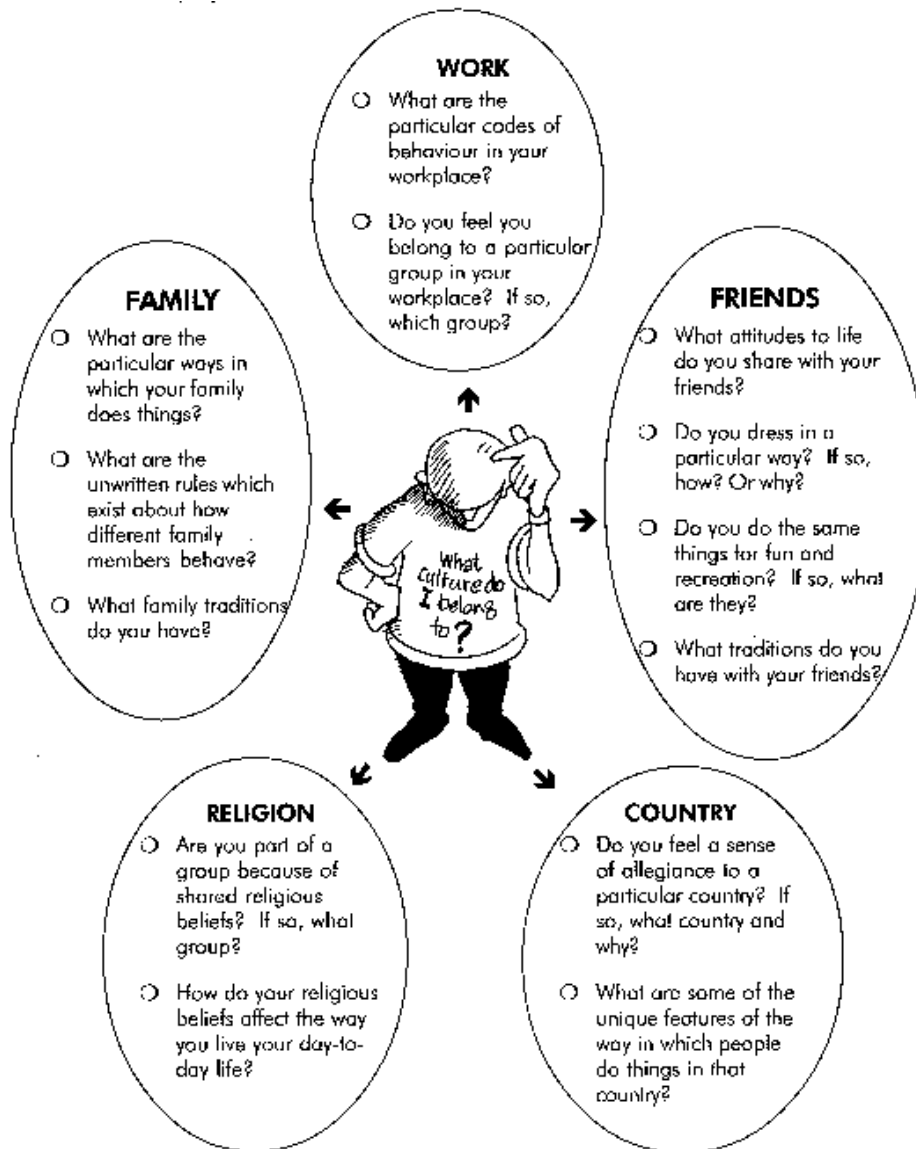
*"The way we do things round here"*

*"The way a group of people agree to be"*

*"The way we live, the way we behave, our beliefs, values and customs"*

In essence, culture is the way any group defines itself - this could be within your family, at work or within a whole country. The really important point to remember is that we don't all define ourselves in the same way.

So what is your culture? Could you belong to more than one culture? Look at the chart and answer some of the questions it poses.



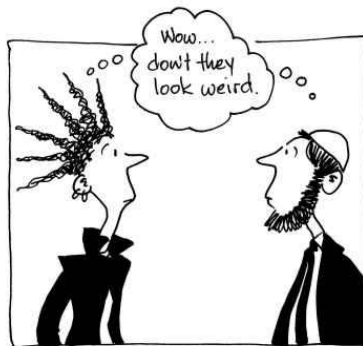
## HOW IMPORTANT IS OUR CULTURE TO THE WAY WE LIVE OUR LIVES?

It is hard to overestimate the effect that our culture has on our everyday lives. In fact culture is an integral part of life. Our cultural values are so ingrained in us that we automatically behave in a certain way. This is part of the reason we find it difficult to understand behaviour that is not the same as ours! If you are a Muslim it's hard to imagine the year without Ramadan. If you are a Christian you are unlikely to have a year without Christmas! If you are brought up in a society where it is polite to avert your eyes when talking to other people, you will probably be quite uncomfortable when people look straight at you during a conversation.

### Cultural influences:

- How you act when you meet people for the first time
- Who made your breakfast
- Whether you live at home with your parents or not
- Whether and how you prayed this morning - and to whom
- How you ask to speak to someone on the telephone
- What you think about men and women
- What sort of social functions you attend
- How you relate to co-workers who are younger or older than you
- How you apologise
- The things you feel you should apologise for
- What you believe is polite behaviour
- The way you express anger
- What you think will happen to you when you die
- Who or whether you will marry
- What you chat about with people
- How you greeted your partner or family members this morning

*(Adapted from O'Sullivan K, Understanding Ways, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney 1994)*



Every culture has its own ways of doing things, its own set of rules. If we are honest, most of us experience feelings of confusion, fear or even anger when we are faced with behaviour we don't understand, especially if the behaviour doesn't follow the rules of our own culture. We tend to automatically believe that our way is the right way - and this is when misunderstandings and conflicts can occur. This is especially true when someone else's behaviour offends our own values.

In reality there is no right and wrong in cross-cultural situations. Remember that what seems automatic and correct to you can be quite alien to a person from a different culture.

### **Languages spoken in Australia**

- Australians speak more than 200 different languages
- 56,000 people speak over 50 Indigenous languages
- 19% of Australians speak languages other than English at home
- The most common languages are Italian, Chinese, Greek, Arabic and Vietnamese

*From the Australian Human Rights Commission Face the Facts Report, 2008 and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011*

### **CULTURAL GROUPS THAT ARE MAJOR TOURIST GROUPS VISITING AUSTRALIA**

#### **Japanese**

- To travel in groups
- Expect punctuality
- Expect high standard of grooming
- Prefer high vegetable and rice diet
- Prefer twin share accommodation
- Short stays

#### **Americans**

- Expect quality service and product knowledge
- Prefer large servings of food
- Like to be served water before ordering food

#### **United Kingdom**

- Young tourists who are often backpacking and therefore want job opportunities in the hospitality industry
- Long stay and cheap accommodation



## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME OF THE MAIN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL GROUPS IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

### India

Religion in India is characterised by a diversity of religious beliefs and practices. India is the birthplace of four of the world's major religions; namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Throughout India's history, religion has been an important part of the country's culture. Religious diversity and religious tolerance are both established in the country by the law and custom.

What Indians eat varies by region and religion. Northern Indians eat more flat breads, while those from southern India prefer rice. In coastal states, such as Kerala and Bengal, fish dishes are popular. Chicken and mutton (sheep) are eaten more often in mountain and plains regions. While many Hindus avoid eating beef, Muslims avoid pork. In addition, many Indians—particularly Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains—are vegetarian.

### Italy

There are a variety of regional languages spoken to varying degrees in Italy, most of which belong to various branches of the Romance languages and are hence descendants of Vulgar Latin. The official and most widely spoken language is Italian, a descendant of Tuscan. There are several minority languages that belong to other Indo-European branches, such as Cimbrian (Germanic), Arbëresh (Albanian), the Slavomolisano dialect of Serbo-Croatian (Slavic), and Griko (Hellenic). Other non-indigenous languages are spoken by a substantial percentage of the population due to immigration.

83.3% of Italy's residents are Christians, 12.4% are irreligious, atheist or agnostic, 2% are Muslims and the remaining 0.6% adhere to other religions.<sup>[2]</sup> According to a 2006 survey by Eurispes, Catholics made up 87.8% of the population, with 36.8% describing themselves as observants.<sup>[3]</sup> According to the same poll in 2010, those percentages fell to 76.5% and 24.4%, respectively.<sup>[4]</sup> Other sources give different accounts of Italy's Islamic population, usually around 2%.

### China

The cuisine can be broken down into four main geographic varieties. In Beijing and Shandong, specialties include Beijing duck served with pancakes and plum sauce, sweet and sour carp, and bird's nest soup. Shanghaiese cuisine uses liberal amounts of oil and is known for seafood and cold meat dishes. Food is particularly spicy in the Sichuan and Hunan provinces. Shrimp with salt and garlic, frogs' legs, and smoked duck are popular dishes.

Standard Chinese (known in China as *Putonghua*), a form of the Mandarin dialect, is the official national spoken language for the mainland. Several other autonomous regions have additional official languages. Language laws of China do not apply to either Hong Kong or Macau and hence have different official languages (Cantonese, English and Portuguese) than the mainland. For example, Tibetan has official status within the Tibet Autonomous Region and



Mongolian has official status within Inner Mongolia.

Buddhism has developed into the most important religion in the country. Confucianism, not a real religion, is just an ethical and philosophical system, which developed from Confucius' thoughts and later was treated as a kind of belief to educate common people.

Taoism, with more than 1,800 years' history originated in the Warring Period and came into being in Eastern Han Dynasty (25 - 220). Now about 300 Taoist Temples are scattered around China, in which about 30 thousand Taoists lived in. Around 5 Taoist schools exist in the country and two main sections are included in Taoism.

Islam was introduced into China in the 7th century in Tang Dynasty, Islam has more than 1,400 years' history in the country. Sunni Islam was the main branch worshipped by almost all the Muslims in the country.

### Indigenous Australians

Australia's Aboriginal culture probably represents the oldest surviving culture in the world, with the use of stone tool technology and painting with red ochre pigment dating back over 60,000 years.

Aborigines occupied all of Australia, adapting incredibly to the harshness of the desert interior by digging small wells and memorising their locations, along with other natural water holes and soaks, through folklore and ritual. In these desert areas, where no significant trees could be found, they learned to make their long, straight spears by digging out straight roots hidden deep in the ground, reaching out from low desert shrubs.



Aboriginal language and culture is not uniform throughout the continent, but varies in different regions. For example, the two great icons of Aboriginal culture, the curved **returning boomerang** and the **didgeridoo**, were not very widespread. The returning boomerang was limited to south-eastern Australia, and the didgeridoo was used in ceremonies only along the very northern part. Australia had over 400 tribes, each with their own language and traditions. Indigenous Australians did not develop a system of writing and that is why Aboriginal Australian art is so important as it was the only way of communicating and recording history.

It is important to realise that when discussing finer details of their culture, some practices described may only occur in some areas, by particular tribes (also called "language groups" or "nations"), or by particular people.

Aboriginal religion, like many other religions, is characterised by having a god or gods who created people and the surrounding environment during a particular creation period at the beginning of time. Aboriginal people are very religious and spiritual, but rather than praying to a single god they cannot see, each group generally believes in a number of different deities, whose image is often depicted in some tangible, recognisable form.

Be careful of assuming all Indigenous people have in-depth knowledge of their culture or history. For various reasons, including separation from community and family, many Indigenous people have been isolated from learning about their community and culture. Asking questions about such things can often make Indigenous people feel uncomfortable. Take the time to get to know the individual before making any assumptions about their knowledge or expecting them to share their experiences. They may be able to share knowledge as they become more comfortable.

### Cultural Values

The following values are central to Aboriginal culture. They influence the way Aboriginal people live and how they interact with others.

- Family – including extended family are a high priority.
- Shared Responsibility – each person is required to be responsible in one area or another. If this role is neglected it becomes automatic for another member of the family or extended family to 'fill in'.
- Acceptance – each individual is understood for both their strengths and weaknesses.
- Sharing – It is seen as part of Aboriginal peoples responsibility, it is an honour.
- Equality - each person is respected with the 'right' to be an equal
- Belonging - to your people, your land and your 'rights' are of utmost importance.
- Ownership - is a shared experience.
- Land-gives us a complete sense of belonging.
- Respect – for ones positions and responsibilities in all areas.
- Time Orientation – Aboriginal people often focus on the past and present rather than on the future. With the attitude of 'live for today', and not for tomorrow.
- Person Orientation – human relationships and interactions are valued. Material gain may have little or no interest.

There are many more social and cultural groups living within Australian society today. Can you think of any?

## INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

Western Australia's top international tourism markets by number of visitors include the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, United States of America, China and Germany.

According to international professional services firm Deloitte, tourism is among the world's fastest growing industries. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) predicts global tourism growth of four to five per cent in 2014. China is now the largest outbound travel market and continues to underpin the global growth of tourism, whereas travel by Western Australia's traditional international markets (United Kingdom, Germany and the United States of America) is slower. Australians continue to travel around the country and overseas in growing numbers.

### The Way People Communicate with Each Other

- Body language varies - amount of touching, forms of greeting, eating habits, sneezing, spitting, belching, and walking past people.
- Every culture has taboo subjects.
- The way we ask and answer questions will depend on our culture.
- The way we begin and end conversations will depend on our culture.
- The way we seek information will depend on our culture.



### CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Cultural differences could affect what happens in your day-to-day work environment - in relation to both colleagues and customers. Staff may need to be rostered on particular days. This might be to allow for people's religious obligations, or to ensure a good balance of staff with particular language abilities.

- Timing of people's holidays to coincide with important religious or other celebrations
- Timing of co-workers' breaks to allow for prayer times
- The need for understanding when co-workers are away from work because of the need to meet cultural or family obligations
- The type of food served in the staff canteen
- The inability of some workers to perform certain tasks because of cultural considerations; for example, chefs may not taste/test food items derived from ingredients which are culturally forbidden
- The need to communicate with customers in a way which does not offend their cultural sensitivities
- Different special requests from customers, such as choice of food, style of room, etc.
- The need for patience in communicating with colleagues and customers who speak different languages
- The way you talk to customers and colleagues

## THE DANGERS OF STEREOTYPING

Whenever we begin to discuss the differences between cultural groups, there is a danger that we start to assume that all people within a particular group are the same. We begin to generalise and fail to treat people as individuals. Can you think of a way in which people may stereotype you?

The following list of statements provides some classic examples of stereotyping:

- All Australians love beaches, beer and barbecues - and they all say g'day
- All elderly people are conservative
- All accountants are boring
- All Japanese people prefer baths to showers
- All Americans talk loudly
- All British people drink tea
- All Jewish people don't eat pork
- All Aboriginal people live in the bush

All of the above statements are possibly true about **some** of the people in each group. In reality, it is impossible to totally avoid the habit of stereotyping.



In many situations having some knowledge about the way people from particular cultures behave is very helpful. For example, if you work in a hotel which caters for a lot of Japanese visitors you will be able to provide better service if you know about some of their general preferences and characteristics. The important thing to remember is that what suits some Japanese may not necessarily apply to **all** Japanese people, and that you still need to treat them as individuals. People of different ages, social backgrounds, economic status and so forth could all have hugely different characteristics and preferences. Indigenous Australian might interpret direct eye contact from a non-Indigenous person as rudeness, lack of respect or even aggression. However, non-Indigenous Australians generally perceive eye contact as a sign of confidence, honesty and politeness and avoiding eye contact is interpreted as a sign of dishonesty, insecurity or lack of interest or respect.

For an Indigenous Australian, silence might indicate a desire to think about a matter but for non-Indigenous Australian silence may cause embarrassment or indicate that communication has broken down. Touching is commonplace between Indigenous people to either initiate conversation or in place of conversation. However, uninvited touch by a non-Indigenous person might be interpreted as a sign of aggression.



## MAJOR RELIGIONS PRACTICED IN AUSTRALIA

**Judaism** - Monotheistic; Belief in the Torah as the absolute word of God; God revealed to the people of Israel; belief in an anthropomorphic God who interferes with human issues; God created the entire universe; belief that Adam and Eve were the progenitors of mankind. Founder is Abraham, the first prophet of God (according to them).

**Christianity** - Monotheistic; One God in three forms - trinity; Belief in the Old Testament (Torah) and the New Testament as the fulfilment and the final, perfect word of God; God revealed to the people of Israel; God sent his only son, Jesus Christ to save his people from the original sin - God is his own son; belief in an anthropomorphic God who interferes with human issues; God created the entire universe; belief that Adam and Eve were the progenitors of mankind; founder is Paul who used Jesus of Nazareth's teachings to start a new religion.

**Islam** - Monotheistic; One God and only God; Belief in the Qur'an as the final and the perfect word of God that can never be corrupted; Belief in the original form of the Old and New Testaments; Belief that Allah (Arabic word for God) revealed to various civilizations around the world but that His word was corrupted; belief in Mohammed as the final prophet of God; belief in an anthropomorphic God who interferes with human issues; God created the entire universe; belief that Adam and Eve were the progenitors of mankind; founder is Mohammed, the final prophet of God (according to them).

**Hinduism** – Hinduism is not a religion but a set of beliefs and traditions which have evolved over a period of time. It is not based upon a single scripture or the teachings of a single prophet. Hinduism is the largest among the ancient religions of the world and the oldest living religion. Hinduism and Buddhism are perhaps the only two religions that spread to various parts of the world through peaceful means.

**Buddhism** - Various kinds of beliefs from atheism, agnosticism, pantheism and monotheism; belief that there is no self, no permanence, and the existence of suffering in life; developed in Ancient India; founder was Gautama Buddha who was born in Ancient India – modern Nepal.



### KEY POINTS ABOUT CULTURAL AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

These are some of the key points which will help you in developing the skills to work more effectively with people from all cultures.

- Be aware of the fact that many people in the world are different from you.
- Don't expect other people to automatically share your values.
- Be aware of the fact that our own culture influences our understanding of every part of our day-to-day lives.
- Respect the fact that people are different and respect their right to do things differently. Imagine your own feelings when others do not respect the values which are vital in your own life. Even if in your culture a certain mode of behaviour is frowned upon, it may be quite OK in another culture.
- Accept the fact that you will never fully understand a culture which is not your own.
- Don't expect cultural awareness and understanding to come easily. It is something we all have to work on all the time.
- Be prepared to challenge your initial reactions to people from other cultures. Be aware of the fact that your reactions are based on the rules of your own culture.
- Try to avoid stereotyping and labelling people.
- Treat people as individuals.

The challenge for Australia is to create a situation where people from all cultures can live in harmony and tap into some of those benefits listed above. In hospitality, this is a key to a successful growing industry.



## **THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY WORKFORCE**

The Tourism and Hospitality Industries are perfect examples of multiculturalism at work. We welcome guests from all cultures and countries and our workforce represents nations from around the world.

Wherever you go in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry you will meet people from many different backgrounds and nations. Some of the benefits of this are:

- A wide range of language skills in the industry
- Different understandings of technology and its value
- Different perspectives on how to solve problems
- More interesting and varied work environments
- Ability to understand customers from different cultural backgrounds

Of course, cultural differences can affect your day-to-day work environment. For example, your colleagues, depending upon their religious beliefs, may:

- Only be permitted to work on certain days of the week, e.g. Jewish people are unable to work Saturdays which is their Sabbath day.
- Be required to observe religious holidays, e.g. Yom Kippur in the case of Jewish people, Ramadan in the case of Muslims, Good Friday in the case of Christians
- Observe strict dress requirements, e.g. covering their face, heads, arms or legs

Cultural awareness means that you can accept and show respect for other cultures in the workplace, even if certain practices seem strange to you or mean you are inconvenienced on the job.

## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS IN AUSTRALIA

Australia has laws to make sure that all Australians:

- Are free to express their own culture and beliefs
- Respect the right of others to express their own culture and beliefs
- Have equal opportunity in social, political and economic life
- Are treated fairly, free from *discrimination* on the grounds of race, culture, religion, disability, language, gender or other basis.

These laws (or *Acts*) have been passed by both federal and state governments.

The law	What it means
Age Discrimination Act 2004	Whether you are young or old, you have the right to be treated fairly and to have the same opportunity as other Australians.
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	People who have disabilities have the same rights as other Australians.
Sex Discrimination Act 1984	All Australians have the right to be treated equally and not discriminated against on the grounds of sex, pregnancy or their marital status. They also have the right to not be sexually harassed.
Racial Discrimination Act 1975	Discrimination against people on the basis of their race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin is unlawful.
Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986	Defines discrimination and connects Australia to international human rights laws.
Racial Hatred Act 1995	Public racially offensive or abusive behaviour is unlawful.
Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012	Employers should give women equal employment opportunities. They should remove any barriers to women entering and advancing in their organisation.
Fair Work Act 2009 and National Employment Standards (NES)	The NES sets out 10 minimum standards of employment, including up to 12 months unpaid parental leave. It also allows parents or carers of a child under school age, or of a child under 18 with a disability, to request a change in working arrangements to assist with the child's care.
State-based anti-discrimination laws	All Australian states and territories have their own Acts which make discriminatory behaviour unlawful. In WA this is covered by the equal opportunity Act 1984.

## Disabilities

Another way people can be different is in ability. We call this disability. One in five Australians has a disability.

### What is a disability?

Some people have disabilities from birth. For others it is the result of an accident, illness or ageing. People with disabilities can face barriers when accessing facilities or services.

It is important to use language that puts the person first and the disability second.

✗ Negative language	✓ Positive language
He's disabled	He has a disability
A handicapped person	A person with a disability
Deaf	A person with a hearing disability
Blind	A person with a vision disability
Handicapped, a spastic, a cripple	A person with a disability

## Verbal Communication

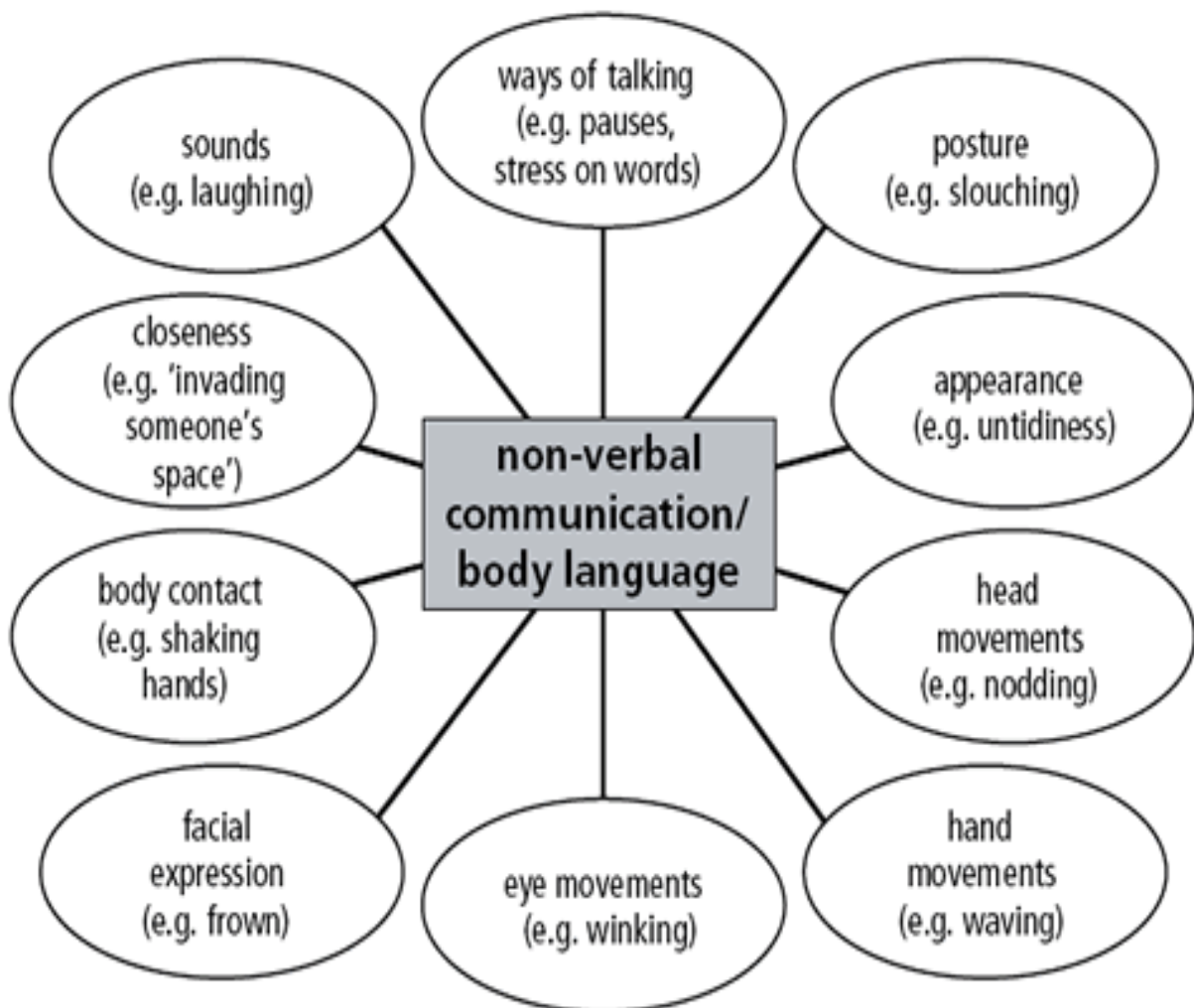
When dealing with different customers use the following speech elements to enhance your message:

- Pitch – the pitch should be mid-range
- Quality – should not be nasal, harsh or out of breath
- Rate – you should ensure that you are speaking at a medium rate. If you speak too fast for the receiver of the message, the message itself may not be received
- Pause - use pausing when appropriate and to emphasis a point within your communication
- Avoid – try to avoid using such words as “um”, “you know”, “like” or words that illustrate that you are unsure. Be strong and confident with everything that you say, as this instills confidence in the receiver.
- Jargon – do not use jargon, as the receiver may not understand the meaning of the word

Verbal communication, therefore, is imperative within the hospitality industry as it is a way to communicate your message with one another. Without verbal communication: goals cannot be achieved, team work would not be effective and it would impact on the overall success of a business. However, it is not only important that you communicate but you communicate effectively.

### Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal behaviour is another important facet of how we communicate. We say things with our posture, facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, and general demeanor. Communication is the process by which we express our ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc., to someone else. If we do not express ourselves efficiently or the recipient does not comprehend our intended meaning, **communication problems and misunderstandings** will inevitably ensue.



## **DEALING WITH CROSS CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS**

Misunderstandings and conflict arise between customers and employees or between employees and colleagues for many different reasons – often just because people are different.

A misunderstanding is a mistake as to the meaning or intent of something which leads to a failure to understand something correctly. Misunderstandings that remain unresolved can lead to disagreements or even arguments.

Misunderstandings can occur when:

- Expectations are not met
- There is a language barrier
- Information is not clear and understandable
- Communication is rushed or not complete
- Slang or local colloquialisms are used
- Humour is used inappropriately
- There is cultural ignorance and insensitivity
- There are differences in cultural practice
- There is conflict between different nationalities, religious or ethnic groups
- Time is not spent to resolve an issue

You may come into contact with customers or colleagues from non-English speaking backgrounds. They may not speak English at all or not speak it very well.

### **Language Barriers**

In cases where language barriers exist, attempt to communicate through the use of gestures or simple words in the other person's language. Some areas to which this would apply include:

- Greeting and farewelling customers
- Giving simple directions
- Giving simple instructions
- Answering simple enquiries
- Preparing for service
- Serving customers
- Describing products and services

## OUTSIDE HELP FOR ORGANISATIONS

There are several sources to access for support in dealing with social and cultural situations. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- government agencies
- diplomatic services
- disability advocacy groups
- educational institutes
- interpreter services
- local cultural organisations

Outside source	What help could they give to your organisation to communicate better?
Translation services	Translate brochures, signage and website into languages of your main international tourist groups.
Interpreting services	Information about different cultures and customs. Advice on the correct ways of behaving when dealing with people from other cultures.
Embassies or consulates Local cultural organisations	May provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural information about other languages and culture.</li> <li>• Interpreting services in an emergency.</li> </ul>
Educational institutions	May have basic foreign language courses for staff.
Government agencies Disability advocacy groups	Advice on how to assist and communicate better with people with a range of disabilities.

## **RESOLVING CROSS CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDING OR CONFLICT**

Employees must be committed to resolving misunderstandings with customers and colleagues and they should take into account cultural differences when determining how best to resolve misunderstandings.

Understanding how customers or colleagues feel and addressing misunderstandings from their point of view, demonstrates a willingness to accept people's right to be different, and to respect and accommodate these differences.

Misunderstanding can occur because of poor communication, a lack of patience or because people make judgements based on their own cultural values.

Good customer service practices are effective in resolving misunderstandings as they ensure the customer feels valued. This can be done as a team so that misunderstandings or difficulties can be discussed and resolved. Every member of the team is then aware of organisational policy and procedures in dealing with difficult situations.

Assistance with cultural awareness and sensitivity for employers and staff can also be sought from professional organisations that specialise in this area and conduct workplace training. Researching websites and reading publications will also provide all members of an organisation up-to-date knowledge.

When difficult situations occur, or if employees feel they do not understand what the customer requires from them, they can seek assistance from their team leader, supervisor, or a more experienced colleague.

### **Guidelines for dealing with cultural misunderstanding.**

- Apologise sincerely
- To help smooth upset feelings, use a friendly and courteous tone and language, open body language and appropriate gestures.
- Don't make excuses.
- Don't make the person feel inferior (worth less than you). Show respect for the person's viewpoint or behaviour even if you don't agree with it or understand it.
- Learn by your mistakes. Work out what went wrong and learn from it. Ask colleagues for advice about what to do differently.



### Key principles of fairness and equity

Tolerance of different beliefs and values of customers and colleagues can be achieved by:

- Being aware of the diversity of people. Employees should not expect other people to automatically share the same values as them.
- Being aware that an individual's own culture influences their understanding of every part of their day-to-day lives.
- Respecting the fact that people are different and respecting their right to do things differently.
- Accepting the fact that individuals will never fully understand a culture which is not their own.
- Building significant relationships with people who are different from themselves.
- Draw on multiple perspectives, experiences, strengths and potentials for mutual benefit
- Throw away the fear factor – prejudice stems from fear.
- Not expecting cultural awareness and understanding to come easily. This is something that needs to be worked continually.
- Being prepared to challenge initial reactions to people from other cultures. Being aware of the fact that an individual's reactions are based on the rules of their own culture.
- Trying to avoid stereotyping and labelling people. Treating people as individuals.

Employees should use friendly, courteous and simple language. They should use body language and gestures appropriate to the culture of the person with whom they are communicating.

### Ways for the workplace to support diversity

A hospitality business might use many ways to make sure the workplace respects diversity.

The business could:

- Have policies and procedures in place to support diversity.
- Train staff in how to be aware of people's diversity and show respect for it
- Offer family-friendly shifts to staff
- Employ staff from a diverse range of backgrounds, including people with a disability
- Build staff knowledge of cultural and religious festivals celebrated by guests and staff
- Employ staff who speak another language
- Offer basic foreign language training for staff
- Offer English as a second language programs for staff who need it
- Translate emergency procedures and other signs into the languages of key employee and visitor groups
- Make sure facilities are suitable for people with a disability



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