

CHCDIV001

Work with
diverse people



LEARNER GUIDE

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This Learner Guide

CHCDIV001 - Work with diverse people (Release 1)

This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to work respectfully with people from diverse social and cultural groups and situations, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

This unit applies to all workers.

The skills in this unit must be applied in accordance with Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation, Australian/New Zealand standards and industry codes of practice.

A complete copy of the above unit of competency can be downloaded from the TGA website:

<https://training.gov.au/training/details/CHCDIV001>

About this Unit of Competency Introduction

As a worker, a trainee, or a future worker, you want to enjoy your work and become known as a valuable team member. This unit of competency will help you acquire the knowledge and skills to work effectively as an individual and in groups. It will give you the basis to contribute to the goals of the organisation which employs you.

It is essential that you begin your training by becoming familiar with the industry standards to which organisations must conform.

This Learner Guide Covers

CHCDIV001 - Work with diverse people

- I. Reflect on your perspectives
- II. Appreciate diversity and inclusiveness, and their benefits
- III. Communicate with people from diverse backgrounds and situations
- IV. Promote understanding across diverse groups

Learning Program

As you progress through this unit of study, you will develop skills in locating and understanding an organisation's policies and procedures. You will build up a sound knowledge of the industry standards within which organisations must operate. You will become more aware of the effect that your own skills in dealing with people have on your success or otherwise in the workplace. Knowledge of your skills and capabilities will help you make informed choices about your further study and career options.

Additional Learning Support

To obtain additional support you may:

- Search for other resources. You may find books, journals, videos and other materials which provide additional information about topics in this unit.
- Search for other resources in your local library. Most libraries keep information about government departments and other organisations, services and programs. The librarian should be able to help you locate such resources.
- Contact information services such as Infolink, Equal Opportunity Commission, Commissioner of Workplace Agreements, Union organisations, and public relations and information services provided by various government departments. Many of these services are listed in the telephone directory.
- Contact your facilitator.

Facilitation

Your training organisation will provide you with a facilitator. Your facilitator will play an active role in supporting your learning. Your facilitator will help you at any time during working hours to assist with:

- How and when to make contact
- What you need to do to complete this unit of study
- What support will be provided.

Here are some of the things your facilitator may do to make your study easier:

- Give you a clear visual timetable of events for the semester or term in which you are enrolled, including any deadlines for assessments
- Provide you with online webinar times and availability
- Use ‘action sheets’ to remind you about tasks you need to complete, and updates on websites
- Make themselves available by telephone for support discussion and provide you with industry updates by email where applicable
- Keep in touch with you during your studies

Flexible Learning

Studying to become a competent worker is an interesting and exciting thing to do. You will learn about current issues in this area. You will establish relationships with other students, fellow workers, and clients. You will learn about your own ideas, attitudes, and values. You will also have fun. (Most of the time!)

At other times, studying can seem overwhelming and impossibly demanding, particularly when you have an assignment to do and you aren't sure how to tackle it, your family and friends want you to spend time with them, or a movie you want to see is on television.

Sometimes being a student can be hard.

Here are some ideas to help you through the hard times. To study effectively, you need space, resources, and time.

Space

Try to set up a place at home or at work where you can:

- Keep your study materials
- Be reasonably quiet and free from interruptions
- Be reasonably comfortable, with good lighting, seating, and a flat surface for writing.

If it is impossible for you to set up a study space, perhaps you could use your local library. You will not be able to store your study materials there, but you will have quiet, a desk and chair, and easy access to the other facilities.

Study Resources

The most basic resources you will need are:

- A chair
- A desk or table
- A computer with Internet access
- A reading lamp or good light
- A folder or file to keep your notes and study materials together
- Materials to record information (pen and paper or notebooks, or a computer and printer)
- Reference materials, including a dictionary

Do not forget that other people can be valuable study resources. Your fellow workers, work supervisor, other students, your facilitator, your local librarian, and workers in this area can also help you.

Time

It is important to plan your study time. Work out a time that suits you and plan around it. Most people find that studying, in short, concentrated blocks of time (an hour or two) at regular intervals (daily, every second day, once a week) is more effective than trying to cram a lot of learning into a whole day. You need time to ‘digest’ the information in one section before you move on to the next, and everyone needs regular breaks from study to avoid overload. Be realistic in allocating time for study. Look at what is required for the unit and look at your other commitments.

Make up a study timetable and stick to it. Build in ‘deadlines’ and set yourself goals for completing study tasks. Allow time for reading and completing activities. Remember that it is the quality of the time you spend studying rather than the quantity that is important.

Study Strategies

Different people have different learning styles. Some people learn best by listening or repeating things out loud. Some learn best by ‘doing’, some by reading and making notes. Assess your own learning style and try to identify any barriers to learning which might affect you. Are you easily distracted? Are you afraid you will fail? Are you taking study too seriously? Not seriously enough? Do you have supportive friends and family? Here are some ideas for effective study strategies:

1. **Make notes.** This often helps you to remember new or unfamiliar information. Do not worry about spelling or neatness, as long as you can read your own notes. Keep your notes with the rest of your study materials and add to them as you go. Use pictures and diagrams if this helps.
2. **Underline keywords** when you are reading the materials in this Learner Guide. (Do not underline things in other people’s books.) This also helps you to remember important points.
3. **Talk to other people** (fellow workers, fellow students, friends, family, or your facilitator) about what you are learning. As well as help you to clarify and understand new ideas, talking also gives you a chance to find out extra information and to get fresh ideas and different points of view.



Using this Learner Guide

A Learner Guide is just that, a guide to help you learn. A Learner Guide is not a textbook. Your Learner Guide will:

1. Describe the skills you need to demonstrate to achieve competency for this unit.
2. Provide information and knowledge to help you develop your skills.
3. Provide you with structured learning activities to help you absorb knowledge and information and practice your skills.
4. Direct you to other sources of additional knowledge and information about topics for this unit.

How to Get the Most Out of Your Learner Guide

Some sections are quite long and cover complex ideas and information. If you come across anything you do not understand:

1. Talk to your facilitator.
2. Research the area using the books and materials listed under Resources.
3. Discuss the issue with other people (your workplace supervisor, fellow workers, fellow students).
4. Try to relate the information presented in this Learner Guide to your own experience and to what you already know.
5. Ask yourself questions as you go. For example, 'Have I seen this happening anywhere?' 'Could this apply to me?' 'What if...' This will help you to 'make sense' of new material, and to build on your existing knowledge.
6. Talk to people about your study. Talking is a great way to reinforce what you are learning.
7. Make notes.
8. Work through the activities. Even if you are tempted to skip some activities, do them anyway. They are there for a reason, and even if you already have the knowledge or skills relating to a particular activity, doing them will help to reinforce what you already know. If you do not understand an activity, think carefully about the way the questions or instructions are phrased. Read the section again to see if you can make sense of it. If you are still confused, contact your facilitator or discuss the activity with other students, fellow workers or with your workplace supervisor.

Additional Research, Reading, and Note-Taking

If you are using the additional references and resources suggested in the Learner Guide to take your knowledge a step further, there are a few simple things to keep in mind to make this kind of research easier.

Always make a note of the author's name, the title of the book or article, the edition, when it was published, where it was published, and the name of the publisher. This includes online articles. If you are taking notes about specific ideas or information, you will need to put the page number as well. This is called the reference information. You will need this for some assessment tasks, and it will help you to find the book again if you need to.

Keep your notes short and to the point. Relate your notes to the material in your Learner Guide. Put things into your own words. This will give you a better understanding of the material.

Start off with a question you want answered when you are exploring additional resource materials. This will structure your reading and save you time.

Introduction

Culture is a learned set of values, behaviour, and knowledge. It forms when a person or group's beliefs, behaviours, habits, and ongoing traditions are passed on from one generation to the next.

How you sleep, how you bathe, what you eat, and what you wear may be determined by your culture. It can also tell you what is wrong and what is right, how to greet friends and address a stranger, how to bring up children, what is impolite, and what is polite. It may prescribe ways to show affection, ways of grieving, and ways to cure illness. Some aspects of culture, such as language and clothing, can be visible. Others, such as values and beliefs, may not be visible.

Cultural practices are normal, everyday behaviours among a group of people that identify with each other. When you share the same practices with such a group, you *belong* to this group of people. On the other hand, there are individuals and groups that do not identify or perform the same behaviours. They are considered to be of differing cultures.

The cultural difference between any two groups might include the following:

Thinking	Talking	Acting	Access to resources	Beliefs
Faith	Practices	Customs	Way of life	Art
Sport	Language	Food and eating	Geographical region	Education
Socioeconomic status	Laws	Class	Country of birth	Family structure
Sexuality	Spoken languages	Popular culture	Mass culture	Media culture

In many ways, culture is a product of society. It is within a society where you are provided with an extensive pool of behaviours that you can adapt, emulate or imitate.

Concepts of Culture

In the study of culture and how it relates to human experiences, the following concepts are important to understand:

- **Cultural Sensitivity**

Cultural Sensitivity is where cultural differences are ‘legitimated’ through a process of self-exploration that enables an individual to reflect on how their culture, worldview and actions impact others.

- **Cultural Awareness**

Cultural awareness is a person’s understanding of the differences between oneself and people from other countries or backgrounds, especially differences in attitudes and values. It involves developing your knowledge and understanding of cultural differences and of the social, economic and political context in which people exist.

- **Cultural Safety**

Cultural safety is about establishing an environment that is spiritually, socially, and emotionally safe. It is a place where there is no denial of identity, of one’s self, and of what one needs. Cultural safety means providing a safe environment to people – where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural identity and needs. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, learning together with dignity and truly listening.

- **Cultural Competence**

Cultural competence is the ability to understand, communicate, and effectively interact with people across cultures.



These can impact a work role strenuously in any workplace. Here are a few examples of how cultural awareness, safety and competence factor into everyday work:

- The responsibilities of workers involve dealing with customers and clients. They must use their cultural awareness to build an accepting and respectful relationship with diverse groups of people.
 - Their knowledge of cultural safety must enable them to implement inclusion policies, help all clients feel appreciated, and foster a respectful atmosphere with their peers.
 - They must use their cultural competence to connect with all clients on a deeper level. Utilising diverse people's unique experiences and attitudes will help them provide high-quality service.
- Instructors or employees in charge of training and developing the skills of others must use their cultural awareness of other people's beliefs and biases. This will help manage conflicts and create rapport with colleagues and clients.
 - They must consider cultural safety when designing culturally safe spaces. This will empower their colleagues and lead to the meaningful exchange of ideas and best practices.
 - Cultural competence allows them to interact with people from different cultures in an uplifting and fair way.
- Managers handling staff must use cultural awareness in their workplace. It will help bring workers from different cultural backgrounds together. This will also create shared meanings in particular situations.
 - They create culturally safe environments that allow diverse people to develop their skills to their full potential.
 - Cultural competence allows them to communicate with staff from diverse backgrounds. It will help improve and implement their organisation's programs and practices.



Diversity

Diversity means variety. In the workplace, having diverse people means having clients, co-workers, supervisors or managers from different cultures, races, genders, economic statuses, religions, philosophies, age brackets or political affiliations.

The following are some concepts related to diversity that affect the workplace:

- **Differences in age**

Workers of varying ages can support each other. Younger workers can assist with physically taxing tasks, while older workers can provide advice on how to do tasks effectively.

- **Differences in race**

Workers from different ethnic backgrounds will be able to share their thoughts on how the organisation can be more sensitive to their respective cultures.

- **Differences in sexual orientation**

Workers of different sexual orientations bring with them knowledge of how to communicate effectively with persons with various sexual backgrounds.

- **Working with persons with disabilities (PWDs)**

Workers with different disabilities can help improve the workplace environment for people with disabilities (PWDs) by suggesting more inclusive policies and practices.

This learner guide should help you understand how these diverse traits can shape your experiences in the workplace.

This learner guide will teach you how to work respectfully with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Through the various discussions in this learner guide, you will learn to do the following:

Reflect on your perspectives.

Appreciate diversity and inclusiveness, along with their benefits.

Communicate with people from diverse backgrounds and situations.

Promote understanding across diverse groups.

I. Reflect on Your Perspectives

People have a natural tendency to feel a certain way about cultural groups. People tend to have positive feelings or opinions regarding a group they identify with. A person also tends to have negative feelings or opinions regarding a cultural group they do not belong to. As a worker, you need to understand and control these tendencies to perform your job duties respectfully and inclusively.

Understanding cultural diversity will help you understand and control these tendencies. *Cultural diversity*, as the name implies, is the presence of multiple cultural groups with varying traits within a society. It is defined by the differences between the traits of the cultures involved and is visible in myriad ways.

The ultimate goal for any society is to bring out and utilise the diverse traits of these groups. In a perfect diverse utopia, utilising different cultural experiences, perspectives, expectations, knowledge, and skills will help address problems and societal difficulties.

Society must encourage its people to develop cultural awareness, safety and competence to reach this ultimate goal. As a worker, you are expected to show respect and understanding for people of various cultures as you perform your job. Through your actions and behaviour, you will be creating cultural experiences for others. Whether these experiences are positive or negative will depend on how your perspectives, biases, prejudices and ideas about culture affect your interactions with others.



1.1 Identify and Reflect on Your Social and Cultural Perspectives and Biases

Social and cultural are often confused with each other. They are related but have different meanings. Cultural is an adjective that describes things related to a set of values, behaviour, and knowledge. On the other hand, social is an adjective relating to community and society.

Your *perspective* is your view of or the particular attitude you have towards something. On the other hand, your *bias* is your predisposition to favour one thing over another, usually in a way that is considered unfair.

Perspectives and biases can be based on social or cultural factors.

- *Social perspective* is your view of or the particular attitude you have towards a community, society or a group of people. *Social bias* is your predisposition to favour one community, society or group over another. People with social perspectives and biases will display a particular attitude or behaviour. Their social identity (e.g. sex, age, race) affects their attitudes and behaviours.
- *Cultural perspective* is your view of or the particular attitude you have towards a set of values, behaviour, and knowledge. *Cultural bias* is your predisposition to favour one set of values, behaviour, and knowledge over another. People with cultural perspectives and biases will display attitudes and behaviours. A person or group's cultural identity affects their attitudes and behaviours.

Your perspectives and biases influence the work practices you use as you perform your everyday duties at work. They may affect your actions and behaviours as you carry out your job responsibilities, such as the following:

- Communicating, either verbally or in writing, with people from diverse backgrounds
- Complying with the duty of care policies
- Collecting and providing various information
- Providing support and assistance either with or without physical contact
- Contacting family and carers
- Respecting deceased people
- Respecting another person's property
- Complying with food, medication or allergy requirements



Being aware of your perspectives and biases can help you perform these tasks in a way that is respectful of your clients and co-workers. Reflecting and analysing your own experiences, thoughts and behaviour help in building awareness.

Knowing your perspectives and biases will help you identify when and how to best use appropriate work practices. Awareness of your perspectives and biases provides the following benefits:

- You will have more control over your actions and reactions in the workplace.
- You can anticipate difficulties that you may encounter in the workplace.
- You will be able to effectively resolve problems that can arise due to differences in racial and cultural backgrounds.
- Knowing your tendencies will aid you in developing your skills in observing, actively listening, and dealing with situations that may arise unexpectedly.
- Seeking growth opportunities can address your weaknesses. They must help fix your negative behaviours and tendencies towards certain social or cultural groups.
- You will be able to demonstrate a more positive attitude towards all people.



1.1.1 Identifying and Reflecting on Your Own Cultural Perspectives and Biases

To learn about your perspectives and biases, you must have a good understanding of your own culture. Knowing your own culture can provide great insights into why you feel a certain way or why you grew up to think of others in a certain manner. You can use this information to check for similarities and differences between yourself and others. Having this information will make it easier to accept some truths. It will also help identify what you need to do to correct some misconceptions or negative attitudes.

Take note that culture is not always clearly defined. Your cultural identity may differ from someone living in another part of the same country. Having the same ethnic background or speaking the same language does not mean having the same cultural identity.

Identifying Cultural Perspectives

Identifying your own cultural perspectives is the process of determining your view of or the particular attitude you have towards a set of values, behaviour, and knowledge. The following are some tips for identifying cultural perspectives:

Make a list of the things you know about your and others' cultures.

Notice how you react or behave in different situations.

Examine which activities you prefer and avoid.

Recognise the values you learned from your family or community.

Determine which of the teachings in your different communities you adhere to.

Reflecting on Cultural Perspectives

Reflecting on your own cultural perspectives is the process of understanding your view of or the particular attitude you have towards a set of values, behaviour, and knowledge by way of serious thought. To reflect on your cultural perspectives, you may ask yourself the following questions. When answering these questions, it would help to use some experiences or concrete examples to support the answers you come up with. Take note of your answers here – your characterisation of your culture will be used in this subchapter and throughout this learner guide.

- What language do you speak when interacting with these other people? Are you able to speak with them freely? What are things that you can and cannot discuss?
- Do you feel obligated to spend time on these activities? Do you have freedom in choosing what to do and who to do it with?
- What are your community's policies? What kinds of laws and ordinances are enforced on you and other members of your community?
- How does your community react to certain news or events? How does your community address problems or issues?
- What values does your community teach its children? What lessons can be learned from your community's stories, songs or movies?
- What recent experiences show cultural heritage affecting your interaction with others?

Identifying Cultural Biases

Identifying your own cultural biases is the process of determining your predisposition to favour one set of values, behaviour, and knowledge over another. To know your biases, you may need to know other people's perspectives. The following are some tips for identifying your cultural biases:

- Determine the values and ideals you uphold and disregard.
- Compare your beliefs with others' beliefs. If possible, you may ask others about their beliefs.
- Be aware of your emotions about things and activities that are related to cultures.
- Try to put yourself in the position of others. You may see the difference between your and others' perspectives.
- Compare how you and others react to different situations.



Reflecting on Cultural Biases

Reflecting on your own cultural biases is the process of understanding your predisposition to favour one set of values, behaviour, and knowledge over another by way of serious thought. To reflect on your cultural biases, you may ask yourself the following questions:

- How does cultural background affect your daily experiences?
- What do you see each day? What sounds do you regularly hear, and what events regularly occur? Do you avoid particular cultural activities?
- What ideas do you refer to when forming thoughts, ideas or opinions? What philosophies do you adhere to? What basic teachings guide your actions? Do you reject other philosophies?
- Are you open to learning about and understanding different cultural practices, customs and perspectives?
- What values do you teach to the younger generation?
- Are there times that you judge, approach or avoid a person based on their cultural background?
- Are there times that you feel that your or others' cultures are superior or inferior?

1.1.2 Identifying and Reflecting on Your Own Social Perspectives and Biases

Social perspectives and biases are different from cultural perspectives and biases. The focus of cultural perspectives and biases are the different sets of values, beliefs and ideas. On the other hand, social perspectives and biases focus on society or community.



Identifying Social Perspectives

Identifying your own social perspectives is the process of determining your view of or the particular attitude you have towards a community, society or a group of people. The following are some tips for identifying social perspectives:

Make a list of the things you know about your and others' communities.

Notice the kinds of people you want to be with. You can also take into consideration the groups where you belong.

Examine which group of people you prefer and avoid. This may include how you regard different societies or communities, including your own.

Reflecting on Social Perspectives

Reflecting on your own social perspectives is the process of understanding your view of or the particular attitude you have towards a community, society or a group of people by way of serious thought. To reflect on your social perspectives, you may ask yourself the following questions. When answering these questions, it would help to use some experiences or concrete examples to support the answers you come up with.

- Who are the people that you spend the most time with? Who makes up your social groups, i.e. families, circle of friends and other social networks?
- Where do you spend the most time in? Do you dedicate time to church activities, working with kids, attending political rallies, working on your fitness, or communicating with members of an exclusive group?
- Do you feel obligated to spend time with these people? Are there legal or social expectations of how to spend your time?
- What kinds of buildings or infrastructures are there in your environment?
- Who do you consult with when you have problems? What are the places, and who are the people that you can turn to whenever you need support or have questions?
- What experiences have shaped your ideas about social groups?
- What are your beliefs and ideas about your racial heritage? What makes people from my cultural group unique?
- What are your beliefs and ideas about people in the same social group as you?
- What do you believe about people from different social groups in your industry?



Identifying Social Biases

Identifying your own social biases is the process of determining your predisposition to favour one community, society or group over another. The following are tips for identifying social biases:

Determine which society or community you have high and low regard for.

Compare your community with others' communities. If possible, you may ask others about their communities. Practice prudence when asking about their communities.

Be aware of your emotions about different communities.

Try to put yourself in the position of others. You may see the difference between your and others' perspectives.

Compare how you and others react to different communities.

Reflecting on Social Biases

Reflecting on your own social biases is the process of understanding your predisposition to favour one community, society or group over another through serious thought. Ask yourself the following questions:

When you see a person of a different social or cultural group, is there a change in your mood or disposition?

Are you more likely or willing to provide better service to people of certain groups?

What is your reaction to news about your or others' communities?

What groups do you refer to when forming thoughts, ideas or opinions?

What positive and negative traits do you attribute to certain social groups?

What do you think of people outside my social or cultural group?

How do your age, sex, gender, wealth, and racial background affect your daily experiences?

What recent experiences show how my age, sex, gender, wealth and race affects my interaction with others?

1.1.3 Identifying How Your Culture Affects Different People and Groups

Your reflection should give you a clearer picture of what your culture is. You should now be able to identify your culture's attitudes, language, policies and structures.

Now, imagine a person from an entirely different culture coming into your community. What do you think would this person feel, and how would your culture affect them in their day-to-day life?

Depending on your culture, the following can have varying effects or impacts on another person:

- Differences in language may affect a person's communication with you and other community members. Being not proficient at speaking your language may hinder them from communicating properly. They may find it difficult to ask questions, engage in small talk, build connections through interactions and ask for help. For example, a person who is not very good at speaking English may hesitate to ask for help from a neighbour out of fear of being misunderstood or misheard.
- Differences in culture may restrict a person when solving issues or addressing problems. If they display an attitude that differs from that of members of their own culture, they may not receive the same support from others. For example, people who take time to pick up trash from the streets and help clean up their community may be ignored or ridiculed by people who leave such tasks to street sweepers.
- The person may receive benefits from certain policies. However, they may also be subjected to discrimination or unfair treatment. For example, refugees can enjoy the protection afforded by the Refugees Convention 1951, of which Australia is one of the signatories. However, other community members may not appreciate this protection. They may instead view these refugees as people taking advantage of the kindness of other countries.
- The person may not receive the same benefits as others due to structural differences. A family from another culture may not enjoy the same discounts or benefits as other families due to differences in size or composition. Housing and access to amenities or services can also be problematic for them. For example, an extended family can find it difficult to access recreational sports activities. The problem may be due to limited available space or sports options.



Your culture will affect others in various ways. How your culture affects persons around you will differ on a case-to-case basis. It depends on specific differences between your culture and the culture of others.



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Your perspectives and biases influence the way you carry out your job responsibilities.
2. Knowing your own culture can provide great insights into why you feel a certain way or why you grew up to think of others in a certain manner.

1.2 Work With Awareness of Own Limitations in Self and Social Awareness

One essential skill for a worker is being socially aware while providing appropriate services. *Social awareness* entails understanding how a person's social traits may inform their values, behaviour, beliefs and basic assumptions.

Your reflections should allow you to grasp your limitations. Limitations are your personal shortcomings or failures in understanding other cultures. Limitations in self include your perspectives, biases and tendencies when interacting with others. However, remember that this is only the first step towards awareness – you still have a long way to go to become fully aware.

It can be easy to fall into a false sense of awareness. People's values, beliefs and behaviour within any social group can vary enormously. And yet, the more a person knows about a social group, the more they are likely to have strong opinions or feelings towards people from this group. This is a false way of becoming aware. Instead of having a better understanding, this false awareness limits a person's point of view to a small box of learned facts.

Social awareness involves exploring social issues. It also involves recognising that everyone is shaped by their sex, gender, age, economic class and race. To become an expert in social traits or to have all the answers in a small box is unnecessary and impractical. It is important to remember that individuals cannot be defined solely by their social norms or patterns.



The following are key considerations of social awareness:

- Awareness of one's own social and cultural influences before learning about others is important for any successful endeavour.
- The processes involved in understanding the beliefs and behaviour of people can vary considerably within each social group.
- Making assumptions or generalisations on the effects of social influences should be avoided.
- You must view and evaluate other people's behaviour and beliefs using the standards of their group.
- Understanding how people adopt new practices and retain old practices can vary within social groups.
- Not all people identify with religious backgrounds or cultures.

Culture is a fluid entity transforming due to globalisation, migration and the diaspora influence. Diaspora is the scattering or migration of people from an established or ancestral homeland.

- Social background information sessions, resources, and cultural awareness training can enhance knowledge about different social practices and issues. The best source of awareness, however, is still immersion.
- In all situations involving diversity, appropriate communication is key.

To better understand your limitations, look back at your answers to the reflection questions in the previous subchapter. Try to see if you can provide answers to these new questions:

- What do you already know or believe about social and cultural groups?
- What do you not understand yet when thinking about the lives of people in different social and cultural groups?
- Are there any customs or practices that you need to learn about?
- Are there any aspects of their daily lives that you have not yet observed or read about?
- What aspects of your life do people from outside your social and cultural group find confusing, different or peculiar?
- Can there be aspects in the lives of others that you find different and peculiar, too?



Your answers to these new questions will guide you in identifying other aspects of culture and diversity you need to learn more about. Over time, you will gain firsthand knowledge and experiences that you can use to fill in the questions you have just answered.

To work with an awareness of your limitations, remember to do the following:

- **Admit and fully realise the extent of your knowledge of social and cultural groups and backgrounds.** You must know your limits when working with diverse people. Knowing your limits can be the difference between providing appropriate care and being arrogant or ignorant.
- **Never pretend to know something that you do not know.** Pretending can be a cause of conflict and can create dangerous situations for your organisation. A universally accepted way to address any limitations is to ask sincere and polite questions.
- **Coordinate with your workplace to address your limitations.** Workplaces allow employees to work with people from diverse cultures. They provide opportunities to develop cultural awareness and understand their limitations. For example, companies hold events where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised and valued. For one day, employees are provided with information about them. Information may be their unique contributions to Australia's history and culture. This practice eliminates stereotypes about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. This also allows a company to prevent discrimination in the workplace.
- **The assistance made by companies to address limitations in cultural awareness must never be considered unfair and partial only to people of diverse backgrounds.** Some of your co-workers might be receiving assistance from your company to address difficulties due to race or ethnicity. You must keep in mind that this assistance is fair. In the workplace, one person's actions can impact everyone else. It is better to help each worker to prevent problems in the future.
- **Never think that any one cultural group should conform to another.** Remember that minorities do not have to conform to the larger cultural group. Similarly, the larger cultural group does not have to conform to a minority. Everyone can live in harmony despite differences in actions or behaviours. As long as respect is given, differences should not lead to problems or difficulties.



Checkpoint! Let's Review



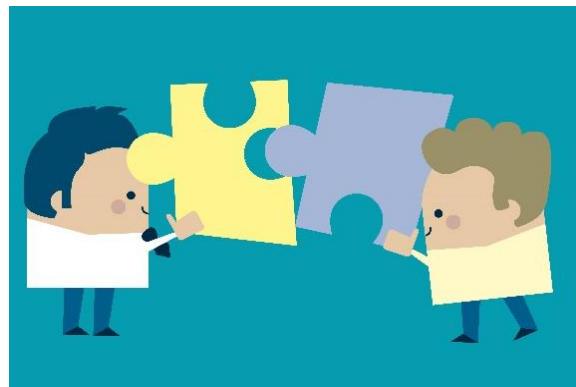
1. Social awareness involves exploring social issues. It also involves recognising that everyone is shaped by their sex, gender, age, economic class and race.
2. It can be easy to fall into a false sense of awareness. The more a person knows about a social group, the more likely they are to have strong opinions or feelings towards people from this group.
3. Making assumptions or generalisations on the effects of social influences should be avoided. In all situations involving diversity, appropriate communication is key.



1.3 Reflect on Your Ability to Work Inclusively and Understand Others

Many organisations and workplaces cater to diverse people. They value inclusion and understanding in their philosophies, policies and protocols. As a worker, you are expected to comply with your organisation's procedures in your daily interaction with colleagues and clients from diverse backgrounds.

It is beneficial at this early stage to ask yourself how well you can work inclusively and understand others. To *work inclusively* means to work in a way that upholds and protects the rights and dignity of all persons. On the other hand, *understanding others* means accounting for difficulties or issues arising from cultural differences. It also includes responding to these difficulties and issues appropriately.



This subchapter will discuss various concepts, methods and practices relevant to working inclusively and understanding others. In the following discussions, you may reflect on your ability to perform your duties by asking yourself the following questions:

Are you already familiar with the concepts provided by this discussion?

Are your practices and actions at work and in daily experiences consistent with the values and ideas presented in this discussion?

Is there any new information, such as from laws, ethical values or other considerations that you must know before providing services to people from diverse backgrounds?

Do you need to take more time to develop your understanding of the different underlying concepts, laws, values and ideas behind inclusion?

1.3.1 Inclusion Through Cultural Safety

Working inclusively and understanding others are accomplished by observing cultural safety at all times. This involves using culturally safe practices.

Culturally safe practices include actions that recognise and respect the cultural identities of others. They must safely meet their needs, expectations and rights. Alternatively, *culturally unsafe practices* diminish, demean or disempower an individual's cultural identity and well-being.

Culturally safe practices allow organisations to create culturally inclusive programs. In the workplace, working inclusively can involve doing the following:

Reflecting on your own culture, attitudes and beliefs about others

Using clear, value-free, open and respectful communication

Developing relationships based on trust and respect

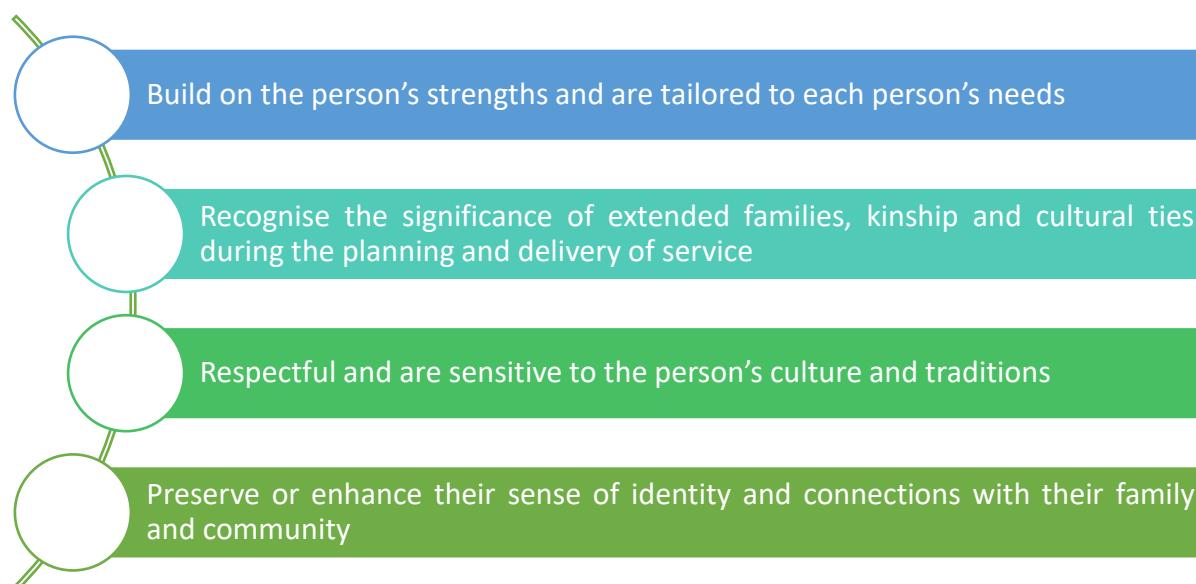
Recognising and avoiding stereotypical barriers

Being prepared to engage in a two-way dialogue where knowledge is shared

Understanding the influence of culture shock

Strongly implementing and following policies and procedures on discrimination

Aside from cultural safety, workers must also remember to provide culturally appropriate services. To do this, workers must ensure that the decisions made and services delivered:



To fulfil these responsibilities, all workers must do the following:

- Develop an understanding of kinship systems, community histories and dynamics.
- Build relationships with cultural groups based upon respectful communication and appropriate professional connections.
- Identify key stakeholders within communities. Then, work in partnership with significant community members and service providers.
- Work collaboratively with local government and non-government agencies to provide planned, coordinated services.

Culturally Inclusive Programs

When workers practice cultural safety and provide culturally appropriate services, the organisation can create culturally inclusive programs for its clients. A culturally inclusive program does the following:

- Ensures that all people retain their right to express and develop their cultural identity.
- Remains progressive. It emphasises the growth of cultures while protecting the self-esteem and identity of all people.
- Recognises the unique contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as other people from other cultures, to Australia.
- Provides positive representation for people of diverse cultures and backgrounds.
- Focuses on contemporary issues while staying respectful of the history of Australians and the values within it.
- Has clearly defined philosophy, policies and procedures. They must be rooted in the various legal and ethical bases that apply to the organisation and industry.



1.3.2 Inclusion and Human Rights



An inclusive workplace respects the human rights of all.

Human rights are based on the obligation to yourself and others as human beings to uphold liberty, dignity, equality, fairness, respect, and independence. On the other hand, *human needs* pertain to basic means of survival: food, shelter, water, clothing, and the like. Human rights advocate for all people to have satisfactory access to their rights as humans.

These human rights are universal because they apply to all people regardless of background and beliefs. Human rights are inalienable because they cannot be taken away. After World War II, the United Nations General Assembly released the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UHDR).

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)* is a timeless document that outlines the rights and freedoms everyone is entitled to. The UDHR serves as a framework for workers across many service sectors. It establishes fundamental human rights that must be uniformly safeguarded for all people. It serves as a guide in providing services to ensure that all people are given equal opportunities in life, liberty, education, health, and security.

Further Reading



To read more about the UDHR, click on the link below:

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

The UDHR is supported through international treaties on different aspects of human rights. The following are the seven core treaties recognised by the government:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
 - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
 - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
 - Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
 - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Dis



Sourced from [International human rights system](#), used under CC BY 4.0.
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Other international human rights treaties define the international human rights framework. These treaties function as international instruments that are observed and upheld in workplaces. Workers must be familiar with these international instruments. They ensure that the organisation has a fully inclusive workplace accommodating all people.

Some relevant instruments are provided below:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
 - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
 - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
 - Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
 - International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW)

- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPED)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR-OP1)
- Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR-OP2), aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (OP-CEDAW)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OP-CRC-AC)
- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OP-CRC-SC)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (OP-CRC-IC)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OP-CAT)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (OP-CRPD)
- Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR-OP)



Additional human rights standards and conventions include the following:

- International Labour Organization (ILO) Labour Standards
- International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
- International Labour Organization (ILO) Forced Labour Convention
- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention
- Equal Remuneration Convention
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention
- Minimum Age Convention
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention

As a worker, your role is to use these instruments properly to ensure that human rights are upheld in the workplace. Doing this may involve actions and steps such as the following:



The requirements for providing the proper instruments are based on human rights legislation and guidelines. These pieces of legislation and guidelines are created and provided by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) is the national authority for human rights. The AHRC has the following functions:

- Address, investigate and conciliate complaints of discrimination.
- Examine and investigate the enactment of the different pieces of anti-discrimination legislation and other commonwealth and local legislation.
- Inquire on organisation practices, policies or behaviours that breach a person or group's human rights.
- Promote awareness of human rights and research on programs that can aid in this endeavour.
- Report on any investigations or findings as necessary.



Further Reading

You may access the AHRC website through the link below:

[Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory also have their human rights commissions and sets of legislation and guidelines to protect human rights.

State/Territory	Human Rights Legislation and Guidelines
Australian Capital Territory	Human Rights
Queensland	Human rights
Victoria	Victoria's human rights laws

The AHRC's actions and those of the other commissions are guided by the Australian Human Rights Framework (AHRF). The Framework provides a more concrete and definite meaning to various human rights concepts. This allows all workers to understand what actions adhere (or do not adhere) to Australia's stance on human rights.

The framework does not include a human rights act. What it aims to do is to make information about human rights available through education. The framework established a committee on human rights. Its function is to review existing legislation for human rights compliance.



The framework has five steps in promoting human rights. These are the following:

Reaffirm the government's commitment to promoting awareness of human rights.

Educate the community for a better understanding of human rights.

Engage with the international community to enhance the protection of human rights locally.

Protect human rights by establishing a committee on human rights.

Respect human rights through compliance review of legislations.

The action plan in this framework should promote and protect human rights.



Further Reading

The AHRF identifies five actions that the government pledges to comply with to respect and uphold the human rights of all people. These five actions are Reaffirm, Educate, Engage, Protect and Respect. Organisations and workplaces are expected to follow the government's example.

To know more about these five actions, click on the link below:

[Australia's Human Rights Framework](#)

Human Rights Approaches

Compliance with human rights requirements means that work practices must align with human rights principles and laws. Workplace approaches refer to how managers and workers implement and follow procedures. They ensure compliance with frameworks for human rights. These approaches are concrete workplace applications of provisions found in human rights frameworks.



You must uphold and protect the human rights of your workers, colleagues and clients. This can be done by aligning workplace approaches with the relevant human rights legislation. The relevant pieces of legislation will be discussed later in this subchapter.

In the workplace, legislation and guidelines translate to obligations you must comply with. They ensure that your organisation's practices uphold and protect human rights.

The following are some examples of how you can apply human rights to your workplace approaches:

Implement workplace policies and procedures to address barriers in the provision of services to clients

Pursue development opportunities on how to provide services based on human rights principles

Plan and provide support in consideration of the individual needs and preferences of clients

Get the opinion of clients and work with them to ensure that their needs are addressed

Evaluate how you and other workers interact with clients to ensure that the rights of clients are respected and upheld

Remember that your workplace approaches must be based on the human rights frameworks. Access the human rights documents mentioned in this section. Use them as a guide in developing and implementing workplace approaches.

1.3.3 Understanding Legal and Ethical Considerations

Upholding human rights and providing inclusive programs and services can be challenging. Organisations and workers are looking to offer services to diverse people. They can find it daunting to account for the many different variables that may affect their services.

The easiest and most effective way to account for these relevant variables is to comply with the legal and ethical requirements and considerations provided by your local authorities, your state/territory government, the national commonwealth and the international community.

The following are some requirements and considerations that you and other support workers must be familiar with:

Anti-discrimination requirements and considerations

Human rights requirements and considerations

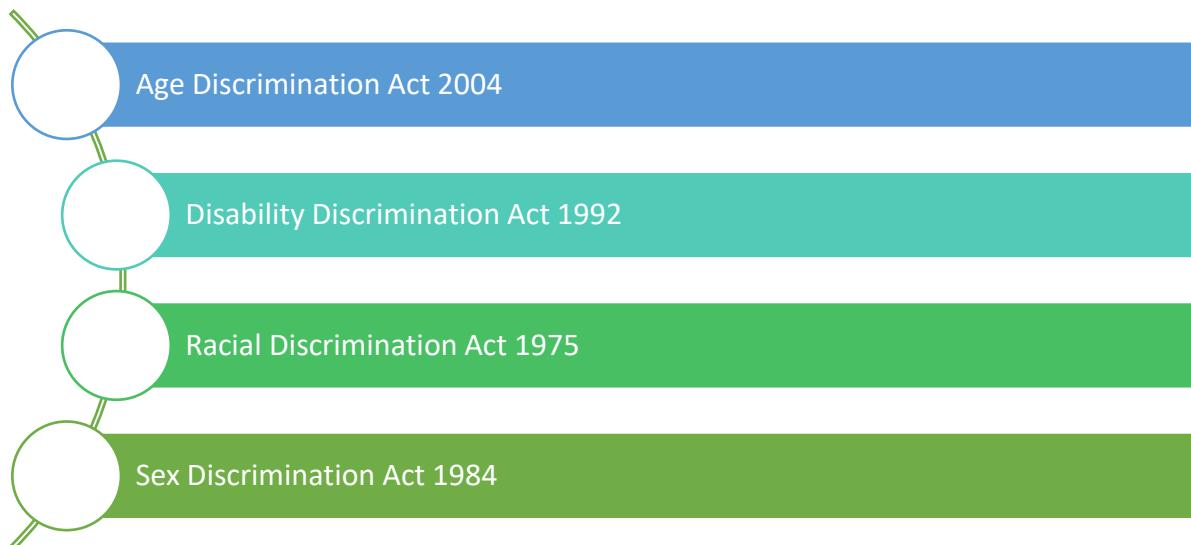
Rights and responsibilities of workers, employers and clients



Anti-Discrimination Requirements and Considerations

Discrimination means giving unfair treatment to people due to their identity or characteristics. These may include age, disability, race, religion, sex, and gender. In Australia, there are laws to prevent discrimination in workplaces, in public and even in government affairs.

The following federal legislation outlaws discrimination in various areas of life:



- **Age Discrimination Act 2004**

The Act promotes age diversity by eliminating discrimination against persons based on age in work, education, and access to goods, services and facilities.

- **Disability Discrimination Act 1992**

The Act ensures that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community. It eliminates discrimination against persons on the ground of disability.

- **Racial Discrimination Act 1975**

The Act prohibits racial hatred (sometimes called vilification) based on a person's race, colour, national or ethnic origin). Examples of prohibited actions include racially offensive material in publications, speeches, public places (such as public transport, school, workplace, park, or sporting events), and the internet.

- **Sex Discrimination Act 1984**

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of sex, marital status, or pregnancy. Sexual harassment and termination from employment because of family responsibilities are considered unlawful.

International Anti-Discrimination Legislation

Australia is a signatory in various international anti-discrimination legislation. The following are some international conventions and declarations that may be relevant to your workplace:



- **Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)**
The convention sets conditions and parameters on what is considered discriminatory when accommodating people who need additional assistance to engage in work.
- **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**
This convention outlines the basic rights unique to people with disabilities. These rights are the basis for the various laws used across countries relating to caring for and protecting the welfare of people with disabilities.
- **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**
This convention provides parameters on what acts and conditions relevant to race are discriminatory. It sets a goal for all countries to review and amend its legal and governmental processes to address issues of racial discrimination.
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**
This convention provides a clear goal for countries to protect the safety, well-being and welfare of women by setting clear guidelines and parameters for actions that constitute discrimination against them.
- **Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief**
This declaration outlines human rights regarding freedom of beliefs and religion. It provides guidelines for countries with people of varying religious backgrounds to follow.

Your State/Territory's Anti-Discrimination Legislation

Individual states and territories also have laws against discrimination. Refer to the table below for the anti-discrimination legislation and guidelines for each state/territory.

State/Territory	Anti-Discrimination Legislation
ACT	Discrimination Act 1991
NSW	Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 No 48
NT	Anti-Discrimination Act 1992
Qld	Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 No. 85
SA	Equal Opportunity Act 1984
Tas	Anti-Discrimination Act 1998
Vic	Equal Opportunity Act 2010
WA	Equal Opportunity Act 1984

Sourced from [Australia's anti-discrimination law](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia 2022.



The four federal legislation and your state/territory's legislation on discrimination contain several clauses regarding discrimination. They specify what counts as discrimination and what should be done and avoided or prevented in the workplace.

According to these pieces of legislation, it becomes unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of age, sex, race or disability in the following areas:

- Employment, including applying for work, enjoying benefits provided by the employer, and joining unions
- Education, including admission to educational institutions
- Access to any premises open to the public
- Access to goods, services, facilities and membership in clubs or sports organisations
- Accommodation such as applying for accommodations or being evicted from their residence
- Land, such as disposal of land through a will
- Representation in advertisements
- Services and benefits received from the commonwealth law, programs, and all representatives and administrators of said laws and programs



These pieces of legislation set penalties for unlawful discrimination acts. These penalties allow justice to be upheld in cases where verified actions caused discrimination. The following are some examples of such penalties:

- Under the Age Discrimination Act 2004, the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, any person or company who publishes a job advertisement that discriminates based on sex or disability is liable for a penalty of 10 units.
- Under the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, racial discrimination in job advertisements does not have a specific penalty. Complainants can submit a report to the Australian Human Rights Commission. The commission will decide on the penalty on a case-to-case basis.
- Under the Age Discrimination Act 2004 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, victimisation due to age or disability can be penalised by imprisonment of up to 6 months.
- Under the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, the unfair dismissal of an employee, including threats to dismiss an employee due to their race, is punishable by law. The employer will be liable for 25 penalty units or imprisonment of up to three months or both.
- Under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, an individual offender who victimises on the grounds of sex can be punished by up to 25 penalty units, imprisonment of up to three months, or both. If the offender is a company, the penalty becomes 100 penalty units.



Aside from the pieces of legislation discussed, various ethical considerations also prohibit discrimination. These ethical considerations can be found in many sources, such as codes of conduct, codes of practice, and your organisation's policies or procedures. They can also be unwritten rules followed by workers in your industry due to a common understanding of what is right and fair.

The following are examples of ethical considerations and responsibilities that you may need to comply with the following:

- **Race discrimination**

- A worker must respect every person's preference, traditions and practices, regardless of race, colour or national or ethnic origin.
- Individual workers must honour the preferences, traditions and practices of people from varying racial backgrounds, so long as it does not conflict with any organisational policies.
- If these considerations are not upheld or observed in the workplace, clients may feel that the organisation does not welcome people from their community.

- **Disability Discrimination**

- A worker must take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against or neglect and abuse of people with disability.
- Through this responsibility, workers are expected to prioritise the health, safety and well-being of people with disability that are under their care. They are required to follow relevant mandatory reporting requirements.
- Non-adherence with this responsibility places clients at risk of injury or illness. Clients may also lose financial or other assets due to abuse and neglect.



▪ Sex Discrimination

- A worker must treat all workers of both sexes with the same uniform level of respect and courtesy.
- Through this responsibility, workers are expected to demonstrate respect for their co-workers. In the workplace, persons of varying sexes and genders must work harmoniously.
- The workplace can become hostile when workers disregard this responsibility. Workers may feel intimidated and left out if certain genders or sexes dominate the workplace.

▪ Age Discrimination

- A worker must avoid offending others through language relevant to age that people can find belittling, condescending or derogatory.
- This consideration requires workers to use language that is appropriate for the workplace. They must demonstrate their commitment to inclusion and empowerment through their language.
- If this consideration is not upheld, workers may develop hatred towards other workers from different age brackets. The language may also put clients off.



Your city or area may also have ordinances or rules on preventing and addressing discrimination. You may refer to your local government for more information on any ordinances that you and your organisation need to comply with.

Industries may also have codes that apply to specific workers and workplaces. The following are some relevant pieces of legislation, codes of practice and organisational policies and procedures that will affect workplaces across different industries:



Industry	Code of Practice
Retail and Business Services	Industry codes
Community Services	Ethics and standards
Financial Services	Banking Code of Practice
Construction and Plumbing Services	Model Code of Practice: Construction work
Creative Arts and Culture Industry	Code of Practice FAQs
Property Services	2022 Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice
Sport, Fitness and Recreation Industry	(Varies per state/territory) Fitness Australia Code of Practice and Ethics - Victoria
Animal Care and Management	Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines
Health	(Varies per state/territory) National code of conduct for healthcare workers

Commonwealth and State/Territory Legislation

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005

Organisation's Policies and Practices

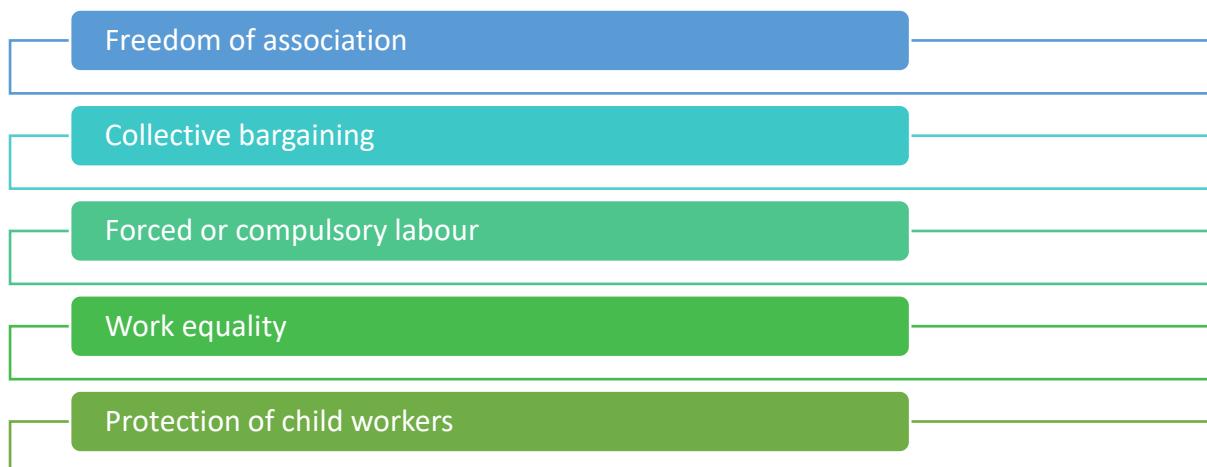
- Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy

Rights and Responsibilities of Workers, Employers and Clients

Workers, employers and clients have rights and responsibilities as stated in international treaties and implemented through national laws. Rights are entitlements that belong to every person in a group for which the rights are written. These rights come with responsibilities that ensure that they must exercise these rights in a way that does not step on the rights of others.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is an international organisation that handles labour-related issues. The ILO is an agency under the United Nations. It sets guidelines that promote labour standards, including the rights of workers and employers. Standards developed by the ILO are submitted to the Australian Parliament for enactment and applications of legislation that would enforce these standards.

The core standards set by the ILO in the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work include provisions for the following:



The right to work and rights in work are also parts of a person's economic rights, as described in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). These rights include the following:

Right to work

Right to just and favourable conditions of work

Right to initiate and participate in trade union activities



Further Reading

Detailed provisions on international labour standards set by the ILC are found in the Fundamental Rights at Work and International Labour Standards. For more information, access the document through the link below.

[Fundamental rights at work and international labour standards](#)

For more information on the right to work and in work, access the discussion on ICESCR provisions published by the Australian Human Rights Commission through the link below.

[Right to work and rights in work](#)

Your organisational policies and procedures should contain provisions that dictate and uphold the rights and responsibilities of workers and the employer. The primary laws covering the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers are the following:

Laws Covering the Rights and Responsibilities of Workers and Employers

[Fair Work Act 2009](#)

[Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)

Fair Work Act 2009

Chapter 3 of the Fair Work Act 2009 details the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers. This law includes provisions for the following:

General protections

Unfair dismissal

Industrial action

Right of entry

Stand down

Other rights and responsibilities

Corrupting benefits

Here are the employer's responsibilities under Part 3-1 General Protections of the Fair Work Act 2009:

- An employer must not take adverse action against another person because the other person has exercised or proposes to exercise a workplace right.
- An employer must not take adverse action against another person to prevent the exercise of a workplace right.
- An employer must not coerce another person to exercise, not exercise, or propose to exercise or not exercise a workplace right in a particular way.
- An employer must not exert undue influence or pressure on an employee to make decisions or enter agreements concerning work-related matters.
- An employer must not knowingly or recklessly make a false or misleading representation about the workplace rights of another person.

When it comes to payslips, the employer has the following obligations:

- An employer must give a pay slip to each employee within one working day of paying an amount to the employee proportional to their work performance.
- The pay slip must be in a form prescribed by regulations; if such a form exists.
- The pay slip must include any information prescribed by the regulations.

An employer has a right to stand down an employee. Stand down means asking employees not to work without pay. Under the following circumstances, the employer can stand down an employee provided that there is no enterprise agreement or contract of employment that prevents the employer from doing so:

- During industrial action (other than industrial action organised or engaged in by the employer)
- In the event of a breakdown of machinery or equipment, if the employer cannot reasonably be held responsible for the breakdown
- In the event of a stoppage of work for any cause for which the employer cannot reasonably be held responsible

Based on content from the Federal Register of Legislation at 12 April 2022. For the latest

information on Australian Government law please go to <https://www.legislation.gov.au>.

Fair Work Act 2009, used under CC BY 4.0.

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 provides the set of rights and responsibilities shared by employers and workers across various industries. The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 serves as a national legal framework for ensuring the health and safety of all people in the workplace.

Part 2 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 contains information on workers' and employers' health and safety duties. Under this law, the employer has the primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of all workers involved with the organisation. On the other hand, workers must take reasonable care of their health and safety and that of other persons in the workplace. To do this, workers must abide by organisational policies and procedures related to health and safety.





Balancing rights and responsibilities ensure that everyone can exercise their rights equally. As such, clients also have responsibilities when accessing and utilising your services. The general duties of clients may involve the following:

- Respecting the rights of employees
- Treating employees without discrimination
- Abiding by the terms of a written agreement
- Accepting responsibility for own actions and choices, even though some actions and preferences may involve an element of risk

You may need to remind the clients of their rights and responsibilities. It is also best to remind your employees to uphold their rights and adhere to their responsibilities.

The Act contains many important clauses that provide the rights and responsibilities of employers, workers and clients. Some of them are provided below:

- Relevant to the employer
 - A person conducting a business or undertaking at a workplace may establish a health and safety committee for the workplace or part of the workplace on the person's initiative.
 - If the person conducting the business or undertaking at a workplace does not establish a health and safety committee on their initiative, they are still required to establish a health and safety committee for the business, undertaking, or part of the business or undertaking: (a) within two months after being requested to do so by (i) a health and safety representative for a work group of workers carrying out work at that workplace; or (ii) 5 or more workers at that workplace; or (b) if required by the regulations to do so, within the time prescribed by the regulations.

- The person conducting a business or undertaking must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult, in accordance with this Division and the regulations, with workers who carry out work for the business or undertaking who are or are likely to be directly affected by a matter relating to work health or safety.

- If found to have not carried out this responsibility, the employer is liable for the following penalties:

- In the case of an individual – \$20 000
- In the case of a body corporate – \$100 000

■ Relevant to the worker

- A worker may cease or refuse to carry out work if the worker has a reasonable concern that carrying out the work would expose the worker to a serious risk to the worker's health or safety emanating from immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard.
 - The health and safety representative or the person conducting the business or undertaking or the worker may ask the regulator to appoint an inspector to attend the workplace to assist in resolving an issue arising in relation to the cessation of work.
- A worker who ceases work under Division 9 of this legislation must (a) as soon as practicable, notify the person conducting the business or undertaking that the worker has ceased work under this Division unless the worker ceased work under a direction from a health and safety representative, and (b) remain available to carry out suitable alternative work.
 - The health and safety representative or the person conducting the business or undertaking or the worker may ask the regulator to appoint an inspector to attend the workplace to assist in resolving an issue arising in relation to the cessation of work.



- Relevant to the client

- Clients must be able to view any notices of provisional improvement. A person to whom a provisional improvement notice is issued must as soon as practicable display a copy of the notice in a prominent place at or near the workplace, or part of the workplace, at which work is being carried out that is affected by the notice.
 - Upon infringement of this right, the offender is liable to the following penalties:
 - In the case of an individual – \$5000
 - In the case of a body corporate – \$25 000



- A person at a workplace (whether or not the person has another duty under this part) must take reasonable care for his or her health and safety and take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons, and comply, so far as the person is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the person conducting the business or undertaking to allow the person conducting the business or undertaking to comply with this Act.
 - Upon non-compliance with this responsibility, the offender is liable to the following penalties:
 - Category 1 – \$300,000 or 5 years imprisonment, or both
 - Category 2 – \$150,000
 - Category 3 – \$50,000

Based on content from the Federal Register of Legislation at 13 June 2022. For the latest information on Australian Government law, please go to <https://www.legislation.gov.au>. Work Health and Safety Act 2011, used under CC BY 4.0.

Aside from legislative sources, you may also find ethical sources that outline the rights and responsibilities of workers, employers and clients. Some sources you may run across are codes of conduct, codes of practice or your organisation's policies and procedures.

In the table below, you can see the general responsibilities of workers and employers.



Responsibilities of Workers	Responsibilities of Employers
Avoiding work practices that are harmful to the health and safety of yourself or others	Ensuring a safe work environment and providing protective equipment if necessary
Knowing what to do if the employer is not meeting their responsibilities	Ensuring that workers are free from discrimination and bullying
Knowing and understanding the terms and conditions of employment	Ensuring that workers receive all due entitlements

Based on [Know your workplace rights and responsibilities](#), used under CC BY 4.0.

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Here are some other common ethical rights and responsibilities, along with actions or recommendations for when these rights and responsibilities are not upheld in the workplace:

Relevant to the Worker

Rights and Responsibilities	Action or Response for When These Are Not Upheld or Met in the Workplace
The worker retains the right to maximise their potential.	There might be instances when workers feel they are being restricted, isolated or segregated not to maximise their potential. They may be advised to submit a complaint to their human resources department.
The worker has an obligation to treat clients with dignity. This obligation includes safeguarding, promoting and acknowledging their capacity for self-determination.	Violations of this duty are subject to penalties and corrective action in the organisation's policy.

Relevant to the Employer

Rights and Responsibilities	Action or Response for When These Are Not Upheld or Met in the Workplace
<p>Employers enjoy the right to expect all workers to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the role as outlined in their terms of employment. Workers must adhere to the employing body's stated aims, policies and procedures.</p>	<p>Employers reserve the right to perform investigations and conduct disciplinary hearings to address worker performance issues. The investigations and hearings must not detract from the worker's productivity and earning potential. In addition, the workers' rights must be protected throughout the ordeal.</p>
<p>Employers are expected to respond to reports where organisational expectations or practices contravene the profession's code of ethics—particularly in the area of client rights.</p>	<p>There are cases where the employer or person conducting the business does not respond to a reported issue or concern. The employees retain the right to address issues to the best of their ability without the employer's express permission.</p>

Relevant to the Client

Rights and Responsibilities	Action or Response for When These Are Not Upheld or Met in the Workplace
<p>Every client is legally protected against discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race and disability. Their universal human rights are inviolable.</p>	<p>Clients reserve the right to submit complaints regarding any negative experiences. They include experiences with workers and other people within the organisation. Complaints must be submitted through proper channels.</p>
<p>It is the responsibility of all clients to respect the rights and legal protections of others.</p>	<p>The organisation reserves the right to deny service to clients who breach any of the organisation's policies and procedures. The authorities may be involved in cases where clients' actions pose a danger to themselves, other clients, employees and any person under the organisation's care.</p>

Knowing yourself and others can only be possible if you grasp the requirements, considerations, rights and responsibilities of all people in the workplace. Now that you have a good overview of these concepts, you may try to ask yourself the following questions to reflect on your current level of ability:

- Have you read through the different sources of legal and ethical considerations that apply to your line of work?
- Do you use practices that are aligned with these legal and ethical considerations?
- Are you capable of performing all of your responsibilities as a worker?
- Are you aware of your rights and what to do when these rights are not upheld or met in the workplace?
- Can you explain their rights and responsibilities satisfactorily when talking to a worker, employer or client?
- Are you capable of doing the right thing, given any situation?
- Are you ready to contribute to an inclusive workplace?

Remember that much will be expected of you as a worker. To ensure that you perform to the best of your abilities, periodically take time to reflect. Working inclusively is not a cut-and-dry process. Your reflections will help you understand what areas you need to improve to become a better worker.



Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Discrimination means giving unfair treatment to people due to their identity or characteristics.
2. Through various pieces of legislation, it becomes unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of age, sex, race or disability in the following areas:
 - Employment, including applying for work, enjoying benefits provided by the employer, and joining unions
 - Education, including admission to educational institutions
 - Access to any premises open to the public
 - Access to goods, services, facilities, and membership in clubs or sports organisations
 - Accommodation, including applying for accommodations or being evicted from their residence
 - Land, such as disposal of land through a will
 - Representation in advertisements
 - Services and benefits received from the commonwealth laws and programs and all representatives and administrators of said laws and programs
3. The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 serves as a national legal framework for ensuring the health and safety of all people in the workplace.



1.4 Improving Yourself and Your Social Awareness

You should now have a good grasp of your awareness and abilities through your reflections. Your reflections should provide an idea of what you need to improve on, such as the following:

Your attitudes and beliefs about diverse people

Your knowledge of concepts relevant to inclusion

Your rights and responsibilities, as well as that of others

Your work practices and how these must comply with different legal and ethical requirements

Your overall awareness when it comes to working with diverse people

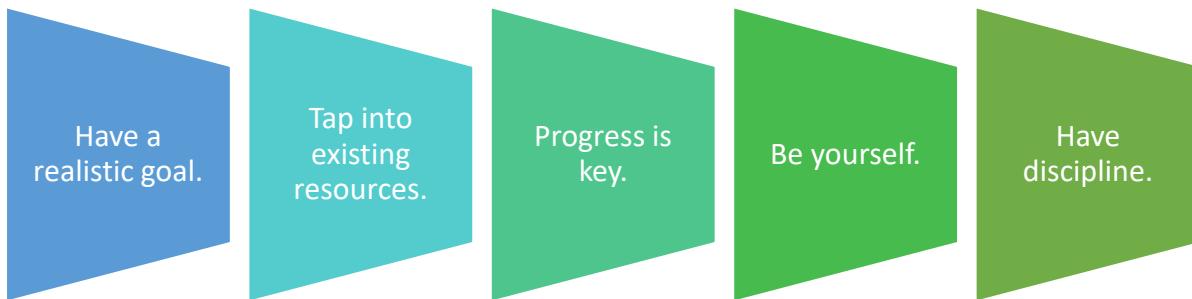
When working on your self-improvement, it can be a good idea to keep a list of these improvement points you identified in your reflections. This list can be an excellent tracking and motivational tool. It can remind you of what you should focus on. It can also provide motivation and a sense of achievement when you succeed in improving one specific aspect in the list.



Improving Yourself

For workers, self-improvement must always be guided by the value of inclusion. You must remember that your improvement will affect how you perform in the workplace. It will also affect how you interact with and form opinions on diverse people in everyday life.

When working on improving yourself, follow these five basic principles:



- **Have a realistic goal.**

There needs to be a clear goal for you to work towards. Improvement is achieved when actions toward it are conscious and purposeful. You may use your reflection outcomes for these goals.

- **Tap into existing resources.**

The best way to improve involves asking for help. No person can provide themselves with what they lack. Sooner or later, you will realise that you must get help from a material resource or other people.

It is always best to coordinate with your organisation regarding self-improvement opportunities. Your organisation will usually have programs or training activities scheduled to assist workers. They are venues for developing their skills or addressing their shortcomings. Check your organisation's calendar of activities for any such events—your attendance in these activities is a valuable way for you to grow.

Another way to improve yourself is to ask for tips from more experienced workers or members of your organisation. Everyone has their style and way of doing things. Nonetheless, experiences within an organisation usually remain consistent. Others may have already gone through the same self-improvement process you are undertaking. Thus, they may be able to share valuable advice.

You may also try looking into various online sources for help. Countless online videos, blog posts and websites provide information and tips to help workers improve. However, note that not all of these sources may be credible. Always check the reputation of any online source. Check any learnings gained from these online sources against your organisation's philosophy, policies and protocols.

- **Progress is key.**

Any progress you make towards your goals must be recognised and recorded, no matter how big or small. Consistent progress is the only way you can improve – there are no shortcuts in developing your work attitudes and practices.

Do not be discouraged by slow progress or even some slight regression. Self-improvement is not a linear process. Allow for mistakes, but make sure that you learn from them.

- **Be yourself.**

When you improve yourself, you create a better version of yourself. This better version must always be you, not an imitation or attempt to emulate another person.

You have your background, ideas and circumstances. Your way of integrating the values of inclusion and respect for diversity must always be based on your own experiences and traits. Doing this ensures that any change is genuine and that all progress can be retained.

- **Have discipline.**

Your dedication to self-improvement is vital to achieving significant change. Self-improvement is tiring work, and often you will be tempted to do things ‘the old way’ just to save time or effort. Pushing through these temptations and sticking with your goals is the only way you can truly improve. Know that your improvement is as much for your benefit as it is for the benefit of other people or your organisation.



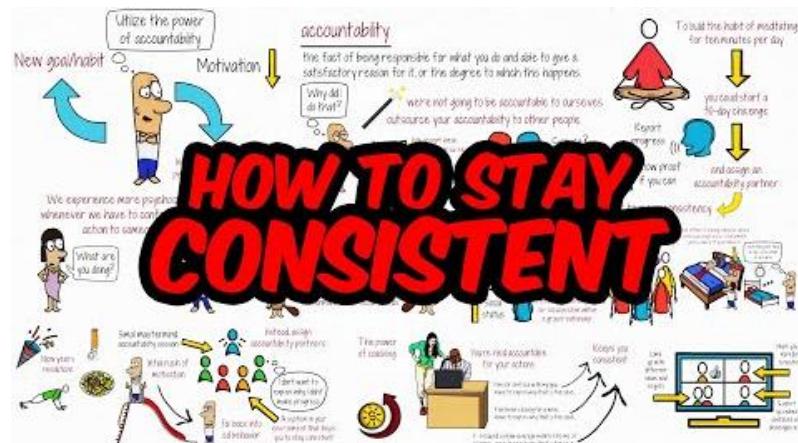


Multimedia

All self-improvement endeavours are bound to involve problems or obstacles. The only way to work around these involves being consistent.

The Art of Improvement provides general advice on how to be incredibly consistent. Watch the video below and see how you can apply the tips and tricks as you work towards your self-improvement goals.

How To Be Incredibly Consistent



Improving Your Cultural Awareness

To be culturally aware, you must adjust and allow different cultures to interact and engage differently. This will only occur if consultation and negotiation are used to ensure all needs are met.

When consulting with persons from different backgrounds, you can follow these guidelines:



- **Understand that you do not fully understand.**

Regardless of experience or expertise, it is important to acknowledge that the diverse people themselves are the experts in what it means to be a member of a different culture.

Unless you are from a particular culture, no matter how sensitive and well-informed you are, you cannot truly know the experience. Take opportunities to learn from families, children and communities and be empathetic without becoming over-familiar.

- **Network with multicultural agencies.**

Get advice and assistance from cultural colleagues to inform your ongoing work. Ask your client if they want a support person or a translator to help them be more comfortable speaking about personal issues.

- **Broaden your concept of family.**

Diverse people can have varying ideas about what family is and who makes up a family unit. Sometimes, decisions require not just the approval of the individual and their immediate family. They may require approval from a person's kin and extended family.

- **Address issues that the client may have about government agencies.**

Be ready to revisit along the way, and get any discomfort out of the way as soon as possible. There are deep issues for diverse people when dealing with government agencies. Anger can be a normal response that you will need to deal with.

- **Express genuine inquisitiveness.**

Asking appropriate, genuine, non-intrusive questions about culture and family can be useful as a relationship and learning-building strategy. Similarly, you can ask appropriate questions to learn about other aspects of a person's life.



- **Learn and use culturally appropriate resources.**

Consult with your local community centre or talk to local groups to access culturally appropriate resources. Always remember that resources must be used correctly. Any misuse or misinterpretation can deteriorate the relationship between you and your clients.

- **Be patient.**

Many people with diverse backgrounds understandably mistrust mainstream agencies or service providers. It takes respectful and persistent work to earn people's trust.

Also, diverse people often spend considerable time on 'general talk' and interaction as part of the business. Do not assume that any person from a diverse background does not understand how certain businesses or processes work—you must recognise that this is simply a different way of doing business.

Workers willing to take their time to listen and engage in the small talk will have earned others' respect and will experience fewer conflicts.



- **Understand silence and respect.**

Silence may be a sign when people reflect and listen to what has been said and are not ready to express an opinion. An important step in forming trust between people is not interrupting unnecessarily or respecting silence.

- **Make an effort always to give something back.**

Give small gifts or other useful and fun things. Sharing your own culture with your clients can help show that you genuinely want to connect with their culture.

- **Do not make impossible promises or suggest outrageous outcomes.**

Be clear about your involvement and your purpose of commitment to work together with the community. Be clear of your commitment to achieving and promoting their goals using a strengths-based approach.

- **People skills are important.**

Small acts such as remembering names and relationships between people can earn people's trust and help you become more credible.



- **Avoid direct eye contact, as a general rule.**

Direct eye contact may or may not be appropriate, depending on a person's culture. Some will say, "Don't believe him when he was talking as he didn't look you in the eye!" while some will prefer that you show respect by averting your gaze.

- **Upon initial contact, be thoughtful.**

When meeting with people of a particular culture, it may be less confronting for the family to have a phone call instead of a face-to-face visit for initial contact where possible. Meeting outside a family home may be more appropriate in the first instance. This shows that you are not visiting to see who lives there or what they have in the house. Maybe the family will feel more comfortable on the second visit.



Additional strategies to accommodate cultural differences in the workplace may include:

- Holding workplace induction programs
- Complying with existing human rights standards and goals, including creating effective remedies in cases of human rights breaches
- Prohibiting and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the preservation of rights
- Prioritising people who came from marginalised and vulnerable groups
- Involving employees in decision-making processes
- Using general guidelines and standards for approaching specific tasks and issues
- Understanding the codes of practice at all levels of the organisation
- Setting time to reflect on actions and events to make and maintain cross-cultural relationships
- Setting time to reflect on oneself before working in a cross-cultural context
- Reaffirming the organisation's commitment to extend human rights by following the anti-discrimination policies ensuring that fair sanctions are provided in cases of violation
- Educating workers on their rights, why they matter, and how they are protected
- Coordinating with relevant authorities that uphold the safety and well-being of all employees
- Ensuring that policies and procedures implemented in the workplace are consistent with the state/territory human rights legislation and the national quality standard

Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Your improvement based on your reflections will affect how you perform in the workplace. It will also affect how you interact with and form opinions on diverse people in everyday life.
2. All self-improvement endeavours are bound to involve problems or obstacles. The only way to work around these involves being consistent
3. When working on improving yourself, follow these five basic principles:
 - Have a realistic goal.
 - Tap into existing resources.
 - Progress is key.
 - Be yourself.
 - Have discipline.



Learning Activity for Chapter 1



Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

II. Appreciate Diversity and Inclusiveness, and Their Benefits

How you communicate and interact with others is a good measure of your cultural awareness. Taking cultural diversity into consideration in your interactions can help prevent misunderstandings. It can also build positive relationships.

Become familiar with different cultural greetings and raise your cultural awareness by learning about significant events, celebrations and restrictions in other cultures, specifically those represented within your workplace.

Be aware of non-traditional family units and be careful with your assumptions—e.g. the carer may not be the biological parent or related. Some parents/carers may have a mental illness or drug-related issues; they may be same-sex couples. Such situations should be approached sensitively and positively, with the focus always on the client's needs.



A conscientious worker does the following:

Respects and recognises diversity

Understands that all persons, regardless of their religion, race, gender, beliefs, or culture, deserve to be treated with courtesy

Understands that people have a right to be different yet treated equally

Supports the needs of people and prevents their prejudices from affecting the service they provide

2.1 Respect and Value Inclusiveness and Diversity Across All Areas of Work



Cultural diversity refers to differences between aspects or characteristics of cultures. In a workplace, having cultural diversity is unavoidable. Employees from diverse cultures bring their unique experiences, perspectives, and skills as contributions to the organisation's work practices. *Inclusiveness* is allowing equal opportunities and participation to people despite differences in culture. Clients from diverse cultures also bring unique expectations, ideas and beliefs to make every interaction interesting and challenging.

There are levels to respecting diversity in the workplace. Depending on your organisation, this can involve:

- Accepting and respecting differences between ideas
- Treating co-workers, clients, and other members of the community equally regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or economic status
- Allowing people to practice their cultural beliefs and customs without prejudice, spite, or hindrance from co-workers, clients, or other members of the community
- Making resources, promotional materials, and spaces available, accessible and inclusive for all

Respecting diversity means that within the workplace, all organisation members must value and protect each individual's practices, values and beliefs. Respecting diversity across all areas of work can be done by doing the following:

- Honouring the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child-rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families
- Valuing workers' different capacities and abilities
- Free your workplace with culturally insensitive materials
- Respecting differences in opinions

Valuing diversity across all areas of work means considering the importance of the differences in the workplace. This can be done by doing the following:

- Appreciating people's values
- Not imposing personal values
- Taking time to understand other people's cultures
- Following diversity policies and procedures





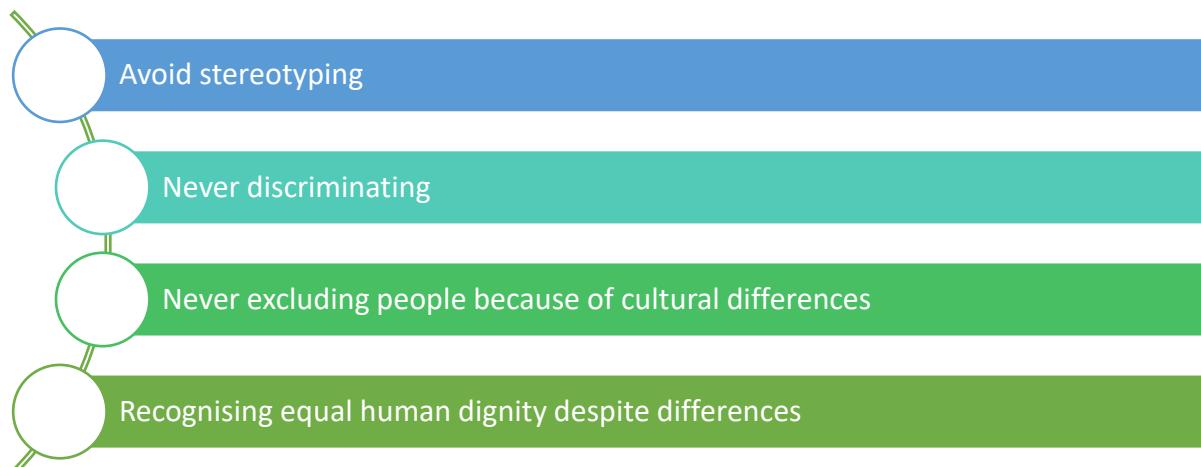
Respecting inclusiveness across all areas of work means recognising and protecting equal opportunities and participation in the workplace. This can be done by doing the following:

Being open to all.

Helping your organisation implement equal access to benefits and working conditions.

Participating in surveys or consultations on workplace inclusiveness.

Valuing inclusiveness across all areas of work means considering the importance of equal opportunities and participation in the workplace. This can be done by doing the following:



2.1.1 Diversity in Australia

Australia is home to many different people. You are bound to already have some experiences regarding the diverse groups of people that call this country their home. Diversity, however, can differ across different areas of life for Australians.



Cultural Diversity

Culture, as previously discussed, is the collection of a group of people's values, behaviour and knowledge. Cultures can constantly develop and change over time.

These are strongly influenced by:

Environment locally, for example:

- Weather – cold or hot, wet or dry
- Geography – in the desert, near the sea, mountainous
- Location – rural or urban

Local politics and history

Major events, made by humans or nature

Interactions with other cultures

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2021:

- 27.6% of the population were born overseas.
- 61,860 international visitors were in Australia during the Census collection period.
- The top 5 languages used at home, other than English, were Mandarin (2.7 per cent), Arabic (1.4%), Vietnamese (1.3%), Cantonese (1.2%) and Punjabi (0.9%).
- The top 5 ancestries were English (33.0%), Australian (29.9%), Irish (9.5%), Scottish (8.6%) and Chinese (5.5%).
- The top 5 religious affiliations were No religion (38.9%), Catholic (20%), Anglican (9.8%), Islam (3.2%) and Hinduism (2.7%).

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Cultural diversity: Census, used under CC BY 4.0.

Cultural diversity affects people in various ways:

- People can find it challenging to interact with persons from other cultures. Differences in cultural norms and traditions can cause problems communicating ideas and opinions. Planning events, designing services and products, and creating community resources are more challenging because one would now have to account for differences in the cultures of people who will access these things.
- People from diverse backgrounds can find comfort in knowing that other groups like them have beliefs, practices and customs that are different from the majority group.

Here are some effects of cultural diversity on specific groups of people:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience a lack of appropriate representation, exclusion, and hostility when accessing basic services such as education and healthcare.
- People with disabilities tend to be further removed and excluded from cultural groups. They are more likely to experience poverty, live in poor quality or insecure housing and have low levels of education. They are often socially isolated, with fewer opportunities to take part in community life.



Social Diversity

Social interactions between people of diverse backgrounds are common in modern Australia. The recent increase in diverse populations benefits the country's growth for many. Very few Australians strongly oppose diversity. Most see multiculturalism, immigration and inclusion as positive features of progress.

Social diversity has produced the following effects in different social contexts:

- Many Australians experience 'diversity within diversity'. It is where their lives are influenced by their cultural background and the culture of the people they interact with. These hybrid cultures allow Australians to create new practices or adjust their lifestyles to suit their needs.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders see the presence of diverse groups as a reason to be more proud of their culture. The idea of 'strength in diversity' allows them to feel at ease in being different from the majority group. It also helps them create a positive self-image when engaging in social tasks.
- People of diverse backgrounds are generally satisfied with their lives. The presence of diversity and the various opportunities for cross-cultural engagement provides a positive effect on morale and overall happiness.



There are, however, negative effects of social diversity that stem from perceptions, prejudices and biases that involve social inequality. Here are some examples of the effect of social diversity on specific groups of people:

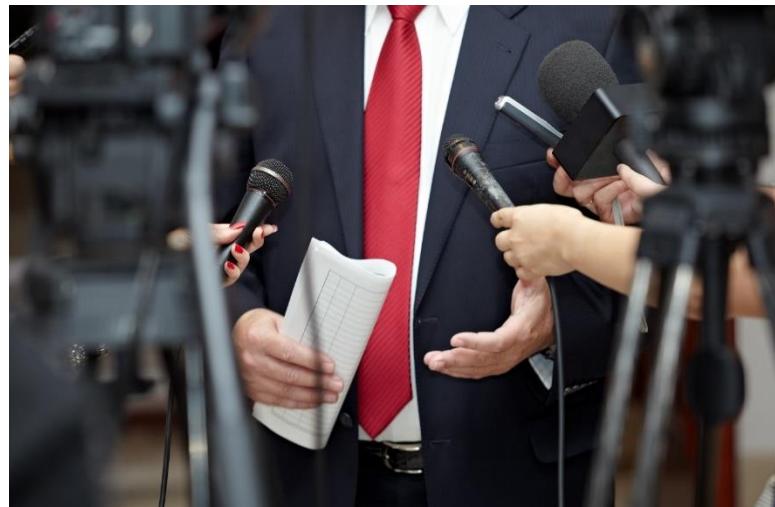
- The racism and discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders may lead to poorer physical and mental health, including reduced access to education, employment, housing, and medical care, and even injury from racially motivated assault and bullying.
- According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, 1 in 4 people who report sexual assaults is disabled. Ninety per cent of women with intellectual disabilities report that they have been sexually abused.

Political Diversity

Australian politics is severely lacking in diversity. In 2018, only 4% of federal members of parliament had non-European ancestry to represent the diverse people. This makes up 19% of the total Australian population. This underrepresentation is apparent across different local communities as well.

This underrepresentation of diverse cultures in Australian politics affects groups of people in extremely negative ways, such as the following:

- Many groups regard their government as 'out of touch' with current realities and the plights of the common person. People of European and Non-European heritage feel that their government is incapable of making correct decisions for them.
- Diverse people develop a sense of inferiority and low self-confidence due to not having a role model to look up to. Asian-Australians, for example, can often feel that they should simply show deference and respect to a government that does not truly represent them.
- Diverse people are less enthusiastic about supporting government-led initiatives and programs. Diverse people would much rather spend their time on an endeavour led by their representatives than on an activity or project led by a government that does not share their ideas and experiences.



The government, however, is making efforts to address this long-standing issue. Here are some examples involving specific groups:

- With places like the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) highlighting diversity in their workforce, more and more businesses are also following suit and giving culturally diverse people more and more employment opportunities.
- The Australian government has national and state territory laws about disability, discrimination, and disability services. There are now laws in place that make it a criminal offence for people with disabilities to be marginalised or given unfavourable treatment.

Economic Diversity

Australia is severely lacking in economic diversity. Australia is known for exporting materials and products from mining and agricultural activities. Most people are expected to work in these industries or related fields. The problem is that global demand for coal and gas continuously decreases. This is because technologies involving renewable energy sources have been advancing. Additionally, the demand for steel ores and other mining products is heavily dependent on the demands of a limited group of countries.

Education is also one of Australia's major international products and services. However, it is not alone in this regard. An increase in competitors providing education services can cause sudden problems for Australia's economy.

These factors affect diverse people in various ways:



- Diverse people are counted on to contribute to Australia's workforce. Australia's aging population relies on immigrants to support the economy. This directly affects what opportunities are available for them in terms of training and education.
- People from diverse backgrounds may also see some restrictions on their employment opportunities. This affects the wages that they can earn and their career opportunities moving forward.
- In the mining industry, there are people from cultures that highly value protecting nature and preserving natural resources. They can find it difficult to reconcile their beliefs with their job requirements.

Here are some effects of economic diversity on specific groups:

- Aboriginal unemployment rates are three times the non-Aboriginal rates. This is coupled with other factors, including lack of access to education, poor training and skill levels, poorer health, and limited market opportunities.
- Overall employment rates for people with disabilities remain low, with workforce participation at around 54 per cent compared to the 83 per cent for people without disabilities.

Effects of Various Influences on Diverse Groups in Australia

Aside from the four areas of diversity above, other factors influence the lifestyle of various groups in Australia. These factors can be in the form of influences or practices that involve diverse people. The following are some of the more common factors that have affected the lives of people from diverse backgrounds:



Factor	Influence
Multiculturalism	Multiculturalism, as a movement, has led to a culturally and linguistically diverse pool of people. It has reimagined Australia in various areas, including clothing, sports, media, etc. Australians now have a wider array of services, product options, food choices, and possible designs to choose from because of its embrace of multiculturalism.
Access to alcoholic beverages	Some cultures have restricted access to alcohol. People from diverse backgrounds who take to alcohol through Australian services can suffer from many negative effects, such as addiction and the development of health problems. Impairment in decision-making abilities can cause them to develop bad habits. It can also cause them to make bad decisions, causing debt, alcohol poisoning, and even death.
Sports	The various sports in Australia exemplify the diverse cultural influences that make up its society. Australia's love of sport directly impacts the number of opportunities available for people to play sports, attend sporting events, and watch televised shows. This includes opportunities for people with varying skills, predispositions, preferences, health conditions and capabilities.

Factor	Influence
The pearling industry	<p>Australia's history is replete with indigenous exploitation that treated diverse people as cheap labours and forced them into dangerous practices. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' women, for example, with a greater lung capacity than men, were often kidnapped, held captive, and forced to dive for shells. Due to their unique traits, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are still expected to work in the pearling industry. They often suffer from eye and ear infections. They are also regularly caught in powerful storms and are subjected to unfair labour treatment.</p>
The farming industry	<p>The other end of the industry spectrum is the farming industry and its many beneficial effects on the lives of diverse people. The farming industry has provided employment opportunities for many diverse people. Data from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture points out that 1% of people directly employed in the agricultural industry identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Additionally, 8% of agricultural employees were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p>
Religion	<p>Australia is among the most diverse country in terms of religion. This significantly affects the challenge of promoting harmonious and respectful relations among people of different religions. For example, children now learn mutual respect and non-discrimination from a young age. Workplaces and communities are now expected to accept different people's religious views, spiritualities, and commitments.</p>

2.1.2 The Western Culture

Western culture is a broad term referring to cultures patterned after or directly inherited from European culture. Australia is largely Western in terms of its culture. Most of the current beliefs, values, traditions, holidays, and language has European origins.

The following are the defining characteristics of the Western culture:

- Democracy and liberty
- A scientific or rational approach to problem-solving
- Christianity
- Capitalism
- Individualism and human rights
- Technologically-aided way of living

If you are a native Australian coming from a non-diverse background, you may find yourself identifying with most, if not all, of the characteristics of Western culture described in the following discussions.

Western Systems

Western systems refer to the West's set of principles and procedures for performing actions and carrying about daily life.

Christianity remains the most dominant religion in the western world. Around 85% of Australians identify as Christians, though that figure continues to decline annually.

Western countries such as Australia believe in using a rational approach to thinking and philosophy. This involves requiring proof as a basis of belief. In general, Australians and other people from western cultures use scientific approaches when making sense of the world.

The west makes use of large-scale authority systems. You can find an organised authority system in religion, government or other social groups. This kind of authority system sets roles for its members and designated leaders based on certain merits or backgrounds, e.g. accomplishments, capabilities or education, instead of family relationships or age.

Western Structures

On the other hand, Western structures refer to the West's set of social institutions and patterns of relationships, such as in communities, families and governments.

The structure of Western society can be described as compartmentalised. Divisions exist between social institutions and groups, with each unit of society having a defined role to perform. For example, education is expected to come mainly from schools and other educational institutions and not from churches, commercial establishments or other units of society.

Persons within Western society are identified based on their jobs, possessions, level of education, achievements and other merits. Families are usually of a nuclear structure—a household will have parents and children. It would typically not include grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and other distant relatives. Western society features a chiefly capitalist market and follows a legalistic approach to regulating and policing its citizen's actions.

Western society also features a small power distance culture. In this structure, social or class inequalities do not prevent one person from questioning or challenging authority figures. This allows Australians to be more direct with their criticisms and opinions.

Take note that not all Australians share these same systems and structures. People from diverse backgrounds may act and behave in a way that is more consistent with the systems and structures of their cultural group.



2.1.3 Points of Diversity

The key to reconciling differences between systems and structures of varying cultural groups is demonstrating a level of respect. This requires a deep level of understanding of people's traits and differences. When working with diverse people, you must consider the many different traits and attributes of people you will encounter in your workplace.

Ethnicity

An ethnic group is a socially defined category of people that identify based on ancestry or shared social experiences.

Ethnicity is not culture. Ethnicity is linked with cultural expression and identification. It is reflected in the food, art, styles, music, material culture and other preferences of people in the group. Many Australians of ethnic heritage identify with Australian culture than with the culture of their parents or grandparents. Due to their experiences growing up within Australian society, they have become accustomed to the preferences and customs of Australian culture rather than their ethnic groups.

Race

Race refers to people of a common language and national affiliations. From the 17th century, race was referenced as a set of observable physical traits. Race is associated with biology and comprises physical characteristics such as skin colour or hair texture. Race is often assumed to be the essential biological difference between different peoples. Over time people of one race have made cultural assumptions about people of another race. Thus, many prejudices and conflicts have resulted.



Language

Language is one of the more prominent and defining aspects of one's culture. It is seen as a human capacity for using complex systems to communicate, and humans have many language systems to do this. Language is not just vocal; people also use many other forms of language to communicate daily. Sign and body language are just two of these forms of language people use daily. Both spoken and non-verbal language can be miscommunicated between cultures, creating conflicts.

Disability

A *disability* is a condition that limits a person's capabilities. It comes in many forms and can encompass various aspects of a person's life.

Disability is defined differently by various groups. Some see disabilities purely as limitations. Others see disabilities as conditions that must have physical manifestations. These are, of course, misconceptions. Persons who work closely with people with disability must follow a more standard definition.



Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, disabilities include the following:

- Total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- Total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- The presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- The presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- A disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- A disorder, illness, or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions, or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;

And includes a disability that:

- Presently exists; or
- Previously existed but no longer exists; or
- May exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
- Is imputed to a person.

Sourced from the Federal Register of Legislation on 21 July 2021. For the latest information on Australian Government law please go to <https://www.legislation.gov.au>. Disability Discrimination Act 1992, used under CC BY 4.0.

A person with disability can experience difficulties related to their health condition, body functions, and participation in communal activities. For example:

A person with spina bifida cannot normally participate in team games and would require help to perform physical exercises

A candidate for employment who has autism cannot communicate at the same level as other candidates

A person who developed vision impairment and suffered from a traumatic brain injury cannot do things the same way as they did before

Because of these difficulties, people with disability require support from different workers, professionals and service providers.

Cultural Norms

Cultural norms are typically seen as behaviour patterns that a cultural group demonstrates. People learn cultural norms from parents, teachers, friends, peers, and other people whose values, attitudes and beliefs they associate with. A person growing up will typically accept the behaviours of people around them as 'normal'.

Normal, though, is value-laden, meaning that people relate 'normal' to what people as individuals consider to be the 'everyday' normal thing. By putting someone in the 'normal' category, they are using it as an excluding concept that often prevents acknowledgement of the diversity of people, their life experiences and situations.



Cultural Values

Values are the principles, beliefs, and practices considered intrinsically desirable by a cultural group. Cultural groups install values during early childhood training, and children grow up to accept these as the way things should be.

Culturally based values may determine how it is believed that things should be done within the culture. Still, it must also be recognised that these learned values might differ from those of people who belong to other groups.

In Western societies, professional notions of healthy behaviour and appropriate interaction reflect many of the values of the dominant, mainstream Australian culture inherited from Northern European ancestors. However, these values may not fit with the cultural expectations and norms of groups with other cultural heritage, where some conflicts may arise.

Most people are unaware of their value systems because these values are so deeply embedded in their view of life. People who want to work with diversity must examine how these deeply ingrained values influence their actions and behaviours before they can handle working with diverse people.

Religions and Beliefs

Religions and belief systems contain behaviours, customs, rituals, practices, symbols and values acquired through practising the ‘belief’ as a group.

Religious beliefs comprise a specific set of organised beliefs and practices shared by a community or group. They usually include a belief in some reality beyond, yet connected, to human experience and existence.

Meanwhile, spiritual beliefs have to do with having a sense of peace and purpose and are characterised by individual practice. It includes developing beliefs around the meaning of life and connection with others.

Each cultural group subscribes to a specific set of religious or spiritual beliefs. Each group can differ in the deities they worship, their ways of worshipping or celebrating their religion and deities, the holy days they observe, the practices that seem correct or incorrect based on their value system, and so on. However, note that each religion or spiritual belief system is subject to interpretation. One group’s beliefs may differ from another’s even though they subscribe to the same philosophy or system. Just because you come from a culture that subscribes to Christian ideals does not mean that you will fit in another Christian culture.



Customs and Traditions

Customs are a set of agreed or accepted rules, norms, standards or criteria that a group of people follows. On the other hand, traditions are long-established customs or beliefs passed through generations. In Australia, there are customs accepted by a majority that people from diverse backgrounds may not accept.

The following are examples of Australian customs:

- Upon meeting for the first time, it is customary for two people to shake hands using their right hand. Kissing or hugging during the first meeting is frowned upon. It is considered impolite to talk about personal matters at a first meeting.
- It is customary for most Australians to look into the eyes of the people they are talking to. This is a sign of respect and indicates that they are listening. Staring at a person for long periods, however, is frowned upon.
- It is customary to address an acquaintance or another person using their family name and title. Most Australians, in the workplace and among friends, are more informal and call each other by their first names.



It is customary to say “sorry” if you accidentally bump into someone, say “excuse me” to get their attention, or say “pardon me” or “excuse me” after belching or sneezing in a person’s home or in public.

In a safe work environment, everyone must be sensitive to the cultural beliefs and traditions of others. This involves using cultural awareness to select appropriate work practices.

A good example of these kinds of work practices includes identifying the different cultures, diversity and values in your workplace and promoting a positive visual profile of these. This can involve putting up pictures illustrating diversity in a respectful visual form in the workplace, displaying artworks from different cultures or featuring photographs of families from different cultural backgrounds. Doing this makes it easier for people from all cultural backgrounds to feel that they are welcomed, valued and important.

Another good example is sharing cultural differences with children and their families by encouraging community involvement in National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration (NAIDOC), Harmony Day, and Peace Day celebrations. Make sure to research and be familiar with these days of celebration. Participating in community activities can also help you develop cultural knowledge and awareness.

Gender Relationships

A gender role is a set of social norms comprised of masculine or feminine behaviours appropriate for a man or a woman in a social or interpersonal relationship. Gender includes the norms, roles, and relationships of and between women and men. This also involves how men and women should interact with others of the same or opposite sex within households, communities, and workplaces.

In many cultures:

- A ‘man’ is of the male sex and demonstrates a masculine social role
- A ‘woman’ is of the female sex and demonstrates a feminine social role

Culture determines and teaches attitudes about gender, femininity, sexuality and the acceptable practices surrounding them. This training starts in early childhood, and many children would have learnt this by about three years old.

In hiring practices, men and women will develop the mindset of perceiving that a person’s sex is not a hindrance to getting a job. They would see the workplace as a safe environment where both sexes are treated equally. Hiring workers regardless of their sex eliminates the stereotypical expectation of others. Some stereotypes are that men are built for construction and engineering and that women are only good for nurturing and caring. It allows everyone to pursue what they want regardless of society’s expectations.



Sexuality

Different cultures have different attitudes and beliefs about what constitutes sexual morality. For many cultures, these beliefs are upheld in their religion. A person’s acceptance of the teachings of a particular religion is more important as a factor in sexual behaviour than a specific religion.

Orthodox Judaism, traditional Catholicism, and traditional Protestantism are alike in their condemnation of masturbation, abortion, homosexuality, transgender, intersex and premarital and extramarital relations.

More liberal members of these same religions may not tolerate these activities. However, they may support them as necessary means to maintain or attain health. Safeguards must be set up in the workplace so that conflicts arising from sexuality and sexual beliefs can be approached with sensitivity, compassion, and respect.

Additionally, sexual orientation or sexual identity is a pattern of romantic or sexual attraction to persons of the opposite sex or gender (heterosexual), the same sex or gender (gay or lesbian), or to both sexes or more than one gender (bisexual).

Sexual identity is how one thinks of oneself regarding whom one is romantically or sexually attracted. Sexual identity is the label (or group) with which the person self-identifies and/or publicly identifies. Sexual identity may also refer to sexual orientation identity, which is when people identify or dis-identify with sexual orientation or choose not to identify with any sexual orientation. Sexual orientation involves a person's emotional, romantic, and sexual feelings or fantasies.

Among these are the following:

- Gays and lesbians – people who are emotionally or physically attracted to others of the same sex.
- Bisexuals – who are emotionally or physically attracted to both males and females.
- Heterosexuals – people who are emotionally or physically attracted to the opposite sex or gender.
- Intersexes – people born with sex characteristics (including genitals) that seem to be in-between the usual male and female types, such as a girl with a noticeably large clitoris or a boy with a notably small penis.
- Transgenders – people whose gender identity or gender expression differs from their assigned sex. Transgender people are sometimes called transsexuals if they desire medical assistance to transition from one sex to another.

Age

Every culture typically demonstrates unique attitudes to behaviours of age groups and what they see as socially acceptable behaviours. Generational diversity includes people of various ages expressing generational differences, attitudes, and values. Whether a person of a certain age is seen as a baby, a child, an adolescent, or an adult can be greatly influenced by the culture in which they live.



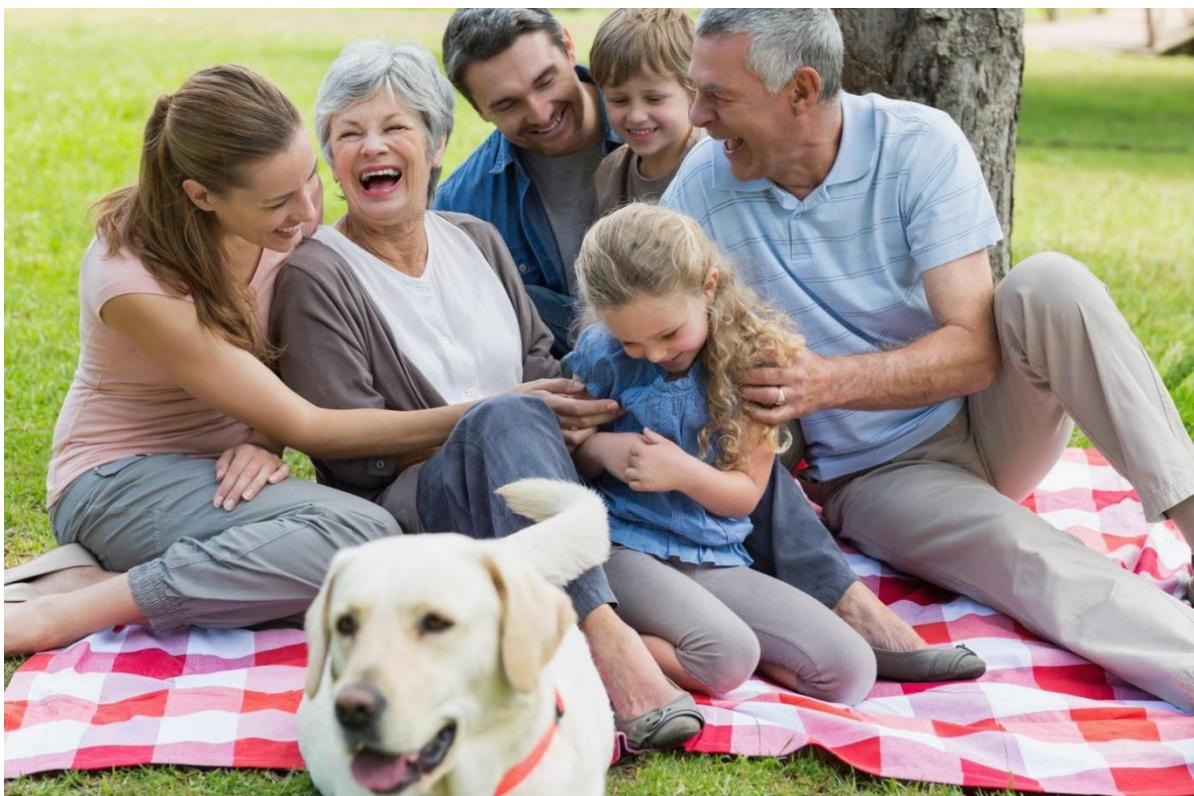
Many cultures can also have initiation ceremonies that take place at significant development stages of a child's life, such as the onset of puberty.

Kinship, Family Structure, and Relationships

Different societies classify relations differently. An example of relations is kinship, and there are different systems of terminology for kinship. Kinship generally refers to the social relationships about human mating, gestation, parenthood, socialisation and siblingship. In Australia, a brother indicates a son of a person in the same parent relationship. In some cultures, 'brother' could also be your mother's brother's son, mother's sister's son, father's brother's son, or father's sister's son.



Kinship in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, for example, is quite complex. It incorporates social and marital laws and defines tribal affiliation, totemic groups and social structures. In this kinship system, everyone is related to everyone else and defines not only who one can marry but also has rules about who you can associate with. This social structuring and kinship system can become very complex. It can be quite difficult to understand for non-Aboriginal people. However, it is a natural part of life for Aborigines, and its details vary from tribe to tribe. This is discussed further in the next chapter.



2.1.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous are labels of colonials on a range of people with extremely diverse cultures and languages. Indigenous is a term generally used to refer to both first nations people of Australia; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. ‘Indigenous’ is often used by the government when providing programs and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders at a national level.

Aboriginal is a term that specifically refers to Aboriginals of the Australian mainland and does not necessarily include other indigenous populations of Australia and Torres Strait Islanders.

When writing or discussing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, it is disrespectful to use acronyms such as *A's*, *TSIs* or *ATSI's*. This learner guide will follow the convention of always using the people’s full names in communication.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture has been a protective influence over the last two centuries, where a colonising culture has tried to impose itself on all aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ life. Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is not just about seeing the ‘visible’ aspects of the group’s cultural identity, such as their food, dress, music, language, art, etc., but also the more subtle ways in which culture impacts on how individuals from their group see and engage with the world.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience a lack of appropriate representation, exclusion, and hostility when accessing basic services such as education and healthcare. There is unequal access to healthcare systems and policy decisions made by outsiders, such as the National and State/Territory government.





For you to acknowledge and respect the impact of events and issues that have occurred in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander history and how they are relevant to your workplace, you must first develop an understanding of their culture and history, the impact of European settlement, loss of land and culture, and the importance of law and kinship in their culture.

This section will explore different topics involving the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These topics can include the following:

- Legislation
- Stolen generations
- Deaths in custody
- Health
- Education
- Land rights
- Maralinga
- Mabo
- Religion

Further Reading



Read about Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander history through the link below:

[Our shared history](#)

Health Issues

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people suffer greater health burdens than non-Aboriginal people. Durie (1999) explained that the poor health status of Aboriginal peoples is due to economic disadvantage, resource alienation and political oppression.

The racism and discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders may lead to poorer physical and mental health, including reduced access to education, employment, housing, medical care, and even injury from racially motivated assault and bullying. Their children are more likely to be the subjects of confirmed abuse and neglect cases than children not belonging to them.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders also suffer from discrimination based on race or culture. This can increase the risk of depression, substance misuse, and even suicide. Healthcare programs and professional support to prevent any abuse and neglect, plus programs on mental awareness to prevent cases of suicide rates, will help address their needs in this area.

Education Issues

Many Aboriginal children in Australia's remote north still receive the most basic education services due to their far location, infrastructure shortfalls, and underfunding.

Western education can also cause disengagement from what the children learn at school to the lives of the community, leading to intergenerational divisions and conflicts. There is a risk of compromising the cultural knowledge of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' children to a more Westernised education system that prioritises their economic futures rather than their tradition and ways of living.



Education is provided in far-flung areas. However, this does not consider the inequalities in remote regions like the Northern Territory. There is still a negative relationship between poverty, health, housing, access to government services, socioeconomic status, and infrastructure to the educational achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' children.

Economic Issues

Aboriginal unemployment rates are three times the non-Aboriginal rates. This is coupled with other factors, including lack of access to education, poor training and skill levels, poorer health, and limited market opportunities.

Income and education impact an individual's ability to 'engage' and 'influence' society. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are known to have the lowest economic status of all Australians. Poor socioeconomic, education and employment levels have links to financial hardship, poverty, debt, homelessness, family breakdown, social isolation and crime. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders suffer disproportionately high levels of domestic violence and over-representation in the justice system.

Socio-political Factors

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience extreme levels of racism in Australia. This is typified historically by their exclusion from elite and mainstream power structures. This is highlighted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders not being recognised as Australian citizens until 1967. The Australian government enforced the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 to legally recognise the Aboriginal land rights that had been dispossessed during the period of colonisation. Nevertheless, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders grow up learning two kinds of histories: memories preserved by their family and history provided in humiliating textbooks that do not recognise the depth of their culture. Note that reconciliation can only occur when sovereignty is acknowledged through recognising past injustices, property rights and cultural practices.



Land Ownership

The land is fundamental to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, both individually and collectively. To be dispossessed of their land means to move away from their traditional customs and practices. They are compelled to assimilate into the culture brought upon by Western civilisation.

Without proper housing and stable food source, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are prone to poverty. This makes it harder for them to avail of other basic services such as proper nutrition, clothing, electricity and energy. Dispossession from their ancestral land means an increased risk of homelessness and a lack of basic services (e.g. food).



Today, land rights are still contested and fought over by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders through public protests, rallies, and legislation. The demand for civil and land rights has greatly impacted their struggle for a voice against the long-held intolerance and colonial invasion.

Religion

The perpetuation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as ‘souls needing to be rescued from the darkness’ contributes to the widespread discrimination and marginalisation that exist up until now.

Missionaries and religious conversion groups have attempted to extend control over Aboriginal people and their engagement with basic services. Missions controlled the Aboriginal people’s language, housing, labour, wages, education, relationships, expression of sexuality, marriages and children.

The destruction of the spiritual beliefs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected their self-reliance and self-esteem. This made their previous ways of living no longer possible.

The stereotypes associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as unwieldy and uncivilised may be seen in companies and local spaces. Their children are denied proper services simply because of their ‘foreign’ and ‘uncivilised’ backgrounds.

Further Reading



For more information on the historical issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, click on the link below:

[A Brief Aboriginal History](#)

Impact of Your Culture on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People and Their Engagement in Services

Review your previous reflections on your own culture from Subchapter 1.1. Before continuing with this section of the learner guide, ask yourself the following questions:

- Were any reflections particular to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders?
- Are there key similarities between the systems and structures of your culture and the Western systems and structures discussed in Section 2.1.1 of this learner guide?
- Do you know of any systems and structures common to your culture and Western culture that has affected the way of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Chances are you already know how your culture and Western culture have affected the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. See if you are familiar with the following impacts of Western culture:

- In terms of language, the presence of English and persisting Aboriginal languages has resulted in the creation of Aboriginal English. It is a variety of Australian English but with distinctive features in terms of accent, grammar, words, meanings, and language use. Aboriginal English is a powerful vehicle in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders express their identity.

The difference in language affects how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders engage with services. These people usually prefer to speak to service providers who can communicate using Aboriginal English. They rarely show immediate trust to others who use 'formal' English when interacting with them.

- In terms of the modern social structure and the community attitudes prevailing within it, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders still experience institutional racism on access to basic services, including proper healthcare and education. Pieces of legislation have been implemented to promote non-discriminatory attitudes toward Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. They help eliminate persisting racist attitudes.



Indigenous people are slowly starting to approach service providers for appropriate assistance. They are referring to changes in legislation when accessing services to make sure that they are not receiving subpar service due to discrimination.

- Regarding family structures, the modern preference for the smaller nuclear family structure threatens to destroy the traditional practice of introducing a child to be part of the community at an early age. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders adhere to a communal structure that allows the entire community to act as an external support group.

With the smaller family structure:

- Parents were not able to share child-rearing duties with other people.
- Children did not develop a community-centred identity. It would have provided them with the sense of belonging that they need to connect with their cultural group.
- Stories passed down from one generation to another were lost. Elders and other people from the community did not have the opportunity to relay them to children of the next generation.
- The ensuing generation became exposed to persistent attacks on their ways of life. The attacks include the destruction of their customs, ways, and even self-esteem.
- Individuals with less access to support systems were more heavily affected by grief, trauma, and personal issues. This caused them to suffer from higher mental health problems.

You will notice that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders only access services when people within their family unit agree to it. Their communal setup requires that the community be involved when someone from the group approaches external organisations for assistance.



- Regarding the modern educational system, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to experience difficulties at school. Much of the difficulties stem from the following:
 - The unique characteristics of Aboriginal English
 - The difference between storytelling and methods of discussing information between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and other communities
 - The lack of specific customs and practices in formal instruction at schools

However, there has been great progress in addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at school. In 2021:

- There were 249,103 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Australian schools, 3.7% more than in 2020
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students accounted for 6.2% of all students
- Four in five (82.9%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled in government schools
- The Year 7 to 12 full-time apparent retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 59.0%. This is 10.3 percentage points more than a decade ago (48.7% in 2011). The 2021 rate is a slight decrease from 59.6% in 2020
- The Northern Territory had the highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at 39.0%

Source: [Australian Bureau of Statistics. Schools](#), used under CC BY 4.0



- In terms of Australia's system of laws and policies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are now protected by various laws. The government ensures that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights, dignity, cultural identity and autonomy are safeguarded from any negative effects that modernisation, technological advances and societal evolution may bring. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can still be wary of government efforts and the corresponding influence on their way of life.

An example of this is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005. Under this Act, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are provided with the right to govern themselves and be self-sufficient. Their lands, businesses and culture are respected and given protection through this law.



Multimedia

British colonialism continues to affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today. Watch the video below to learn more.

[Australia's indigenous people say they're still suffering legacy of British colonialism - BBC News](#)



Knowing the impact of Western systems and structures on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should provide some insights as to why things are the way they are in the workplace and society.

In the future, there might be instances when you are resolving an issue or conflict relevant to diversity in your workplace.

In those instances, you may ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the main differences between your culture and theirs?
- What experiences could have caused people from their culture to behave differently towards people from yours?
- What social issues do people from their culture have to endure? How could these issues be affecting their behaviour at this moment?



These questions will not provide you with an answer to the issue at hand. They will, however, allow you to build respect for the person and consider their circumstance. This should allow you to resolve the issue in a kind, considerate and fair way.



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. People from diverse backgrounds can find comfort in knowing that other groups have beliefs, practices and customs that are different from the majority group.
2. Very few Australians strongly oppose diversity—most see multiculturalism, immigration and inclusion as positive features of progress.
3. Australia is largely Western in terms of its culture. Most of the current beliefs, values, traditions, holidays, and language has European origins.
4. Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture involves seeing the more subtle ways in which culture impacts how individuals from their group see and engage with the world.
5. Everyone must be sensitive to the cultural beliefs and traditions of others. This involves using cultural awareness to select appropriate work practices.

2.2 Contribute to the Development of Workplace and Professional Relationships Based on Appreciation of Diversity and Inclusiveness

All people in the workplace must be treated with respect and appreciation. Your client, co-worker, or employer must be treated with respect regardless of their traits and attributes. This is accomplished through a set of organisational policies and procedures.

These policies and procedures are founded on Australia's laws to promote cultural diversity acceptance. They provide a foundation for productive and efficient workplaces and serve as a guide for workplace relations.

Professional relationships, also called work relationships, refer to the connection and interaction in the workplace. It can be with the following:



Having close and inclusive professional relationships will always involve differences in communication styles, work ethics, and opinions about the organisation. There will always be positive and negative aspects to forming close, inclusive relationships. You are likely to find advantages and disadvantages in workplace relations.



The following lists some examples of these advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages	Disadvantages
Working with others is enjoyable.	People with power or strong personalities can dominate the relationship dynamic.
It is easier to generate new ideas.	It can be difficult to get people together, and managing ideas can be cumbersome.
Everyone can share in decision-making.	It can take a long time to make decisions.
Everyone can feel pride in being part of a group.	Arguments could occur more frequently if all members had strong opinions.
Members will be more committed to the decisions they make.	Less confident or quiet people may have difficulty contributing to discussions.
Members will be able to support each other.	Some members may not be as supportive as others.



You must build work relationships to achieve success in your workplace. You must also interact with people positively to achieve your goals. You can contribute to the development of the workplace based on the appreciation of diversity and inclusiveness by doing the following:

- Following organisational policies and procedures
- Participating in the surveys and consultation regarding diversity and inclusiveness
- Attending seminars and training regarding cultural appreciation and applying them to your workplace
- Cultivating the following values:
 - Respect – You must always value others' opinions.
 - Openness – You must be able to accept your colleagues despite their differences.
 - Effective communication – Communication will help you build and maintain professionalism while people express their thoughts.
 - Equality – Everyone should be given fair opportunity and rights in the workplace.
 - Understanding – Everyone must be sensitive and mindful of the differences in personal opinions and background.



Here are some things to consider in contributing to the development of professional relationships based on the appreciation of diversity and inclusiveness:

- **Maintain a positive attitude.**

Avoid negative thoughts and criticisms. Become aware of prejudices about an aspect of your co-workers' lives. For example, be aware of their religion, customs, culture, lifestyle choices, and so on. You can work towards eliminating your prejudices once you have this self-awareness. Prejudices often arise out of uncertainty or fear; this is the fear of the unknown. Try to be non-judgemental and more accepting of others. Give people the benefit of the doubt and always strive to learn more about other cultures.

- **Improve your communication skills.**

Carefully listen to the other person. Try not to focus on their accent, pronunciation or some other attribute. Respond appropriately by listening carefully to avoid misunderstandings. Check with them if you are unsure what they said; for example: "So, are you saying we should...?"

- **Resolve conflicts early on.**

It is sometimes difficult to avoid misunderstandings. This may be a misunderstanding involving ineffective communication or differences in cross-cultural communication. Do not allow a conflict that is brewing to fester—resolve it early. Address the problem with co-workers, develop a plan of action, and then work together to resolve conflicts.



- **Treat all workers with respect.**

Be fair to all your coworkers, whoever they are, or no matter how different they may be from you. Be fair regardless of linguistic or cultural background or other areas such as gender, age, lifestyle, disability, or position in the organisation.

Workers should all be treated equally. This means keeping them in conversations, paying attention, listening carefully, responding appropriately, and most importantly, being respectful. Being professional, courteous, open and honest about feelings, and allowing others to do the same.

For instance, your company may schedule a team-building retreat with all employees from different backgrounds. Activities that promote other cultures allow the employees to recognise other peoples' similarities and differences. Sharing stories that showcase everyone's unique culture leads to cultural understanding. This shows that every individual, regardless of their culture, race, or ethnicity, has a significant contribution to their community. Team-building activities teach people to appreciate and celebrate cultural diversity. These allow them to treat everyone as equals without any form of aggression and dominant behaviour. This will play a role in eliminating stereotypes of other marginalised groups such as the Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- **Share information about cultural practices.**

You and your coworkers might share aspects of your religion and culture. Find common interest-you might see the same similarities as well as differences. Visiting exhibits and museums will help you learn more about their culture. Museum visits and exhibits will also help staff and management appreciate and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' contributions. These visits can help them form bonds with people from different ethnicities in the workplace. It will also help in treating them as individuals having a unique contribution to their community.



- **Anticipate cultural differences.**

When working in harmony with people from diverse backgrounds, you have to be tolerant and respectful of beliefs, religious practices, and values that may differ from your own. Expecting cultural differences and preparing for them will allow you to see yourself in other people's shoes. These will also help you respect their position more easily. You will better empathise with someone from a diverse background if you have prepared yourself to accept and understand differences before your interaction.

Anticipating cultural differences can also help you choose your words more carefully. Doing this will allow you to avoid using discriminatory or inappropriate remarks or comments on one's race. This will help prevent the development of unhealthy relationships stemming from ignorance or misunderstandings.



Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Prejudices often arise out of uncertainty or fear; this is the fear of the unknown. Try to be non-judgemental and more accepting of others. Give people the benefit of the doubt and always strive to learn more about other cultures.
2. When communicating with diverse people, listen carefully to avoid misunderstandings. Check with them if you are unsure what they said; for example: "So, are you saying we should...?"
3. Visiting exhibits and museums will help you learn more about other people's cultures. Museum visits and exhibits will help staff and management in the workplace appreciate and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' contributions. These visits will help them form bonds with people from different ethnicities in the workplace. These will also help in treating them as individuals having a unique contribution to their community.

2.3 Use Work Practices That Make Environments Safe for All



Workers must acknowledge and embrace cultural safety and individuals' unique linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Your work will usually provide opportunities for people to express their culture, meet their cultural needs, and share their cultural heritage. These would require you to practice a degree of cultural safety.

Cultural safety, as previously discussed, ensures that a person's culture is accepted and respected at all times. It requires that service providers embrace cultural considerations.

Being free from fear, anxiety, and feelings of discomfort is when people feel culturally safe. They feel accepted, comfortable, and included.

As mentioned in this Learner Guide, the principal goal of cultural competence is acceptance and recognition of differences between seeing such differences and people from a positive perspective.

Competent principles and practices demonstrate an acknowledgement of respect for people of all ethnic, racial, linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Cultural competence is a developmental process. No matter how culturally adept you are, there will always be room for improvement.

Cultural competency consists of the following:

Acceptance and awareness of cultural differences

Cultural values of one's awareness

Recognising that people from different cultures have different ways of behaving, interpreting, communicating, and problem-solving

Ability and willingness to adapt to being sensitive to the needs of coworkers' cultural backgrounds

This means being culturally competent at work, having the ability and will to address unique needs arising, and being able to respond to these from each individual's culture.

In an organisation, no matter the position, everyone has a role to play in achieving cultural competence. The organisation can achieve more through teamwork than as individuals.



2.3.1 Providing for the Needs of Marginalised Groups



A diverse workplace will usually adhere to the principle of equity. Equity is a concept that calls for the fair distribution of efforts and resources such that those who need more assistance can receive it. It is a concept that promotes fairness and ensures that workplaces are considerate of the needs of all.

Practising equity in a diverse workplace is giving special consideration to marginalised groups' needs. This involves safeguarding them from risk factors by providing various protective factors.

Risk and Protective Factors

Risk factors are entities or situations that can cause negative effects. The opposite happens with protective factors, where positive effects come up. Ideally, risk factors are accounted for and prevented from surfacing or existing in the workplace. To prevent them is to implement measures by providing protective factors.

The table below shows some examples of common risk and protective factors.

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
A person with physical disability lacks any physical activities or exercise in their daily schedule.	A person with disability is provided with exercise programs in their daily schedule. Exercise programs must be specifically tailored to be beneficial and convenient to them.
A person with chronic health problems lacks access to immediate and proper healthcare.	Increased focus and access to healthcare programs are prioritised in the client's care plan.
An immigrant experiences discrimination in the workplace daily.	The organisation enforces policies and procedures to eliminate discrimination in the workplace.
An Aboriginal person is separated from his ancestral land.	The Aboriginal Land Rights Act was implemented to reclaim and redistribute all dispossessed lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Clients may have different risk or protective factors depending on their background, culture, experiences and other traits. A risk (or protective) factor for one person may not be the same for another, regardless of the traits they share. Proper accounting of risk and protective factors will have to be performed on a case-to-case basis. It will depend on the specific client or co-worker concerned.

When identifying risk or protective factors, refer to relevant documents or information sources unique to the person concerned. This can be a care plan, medical records, progress notes, client profiles or other sources. You may also ask the person and their family. Do not make assumptions.



2.3.2 Other Care Needs



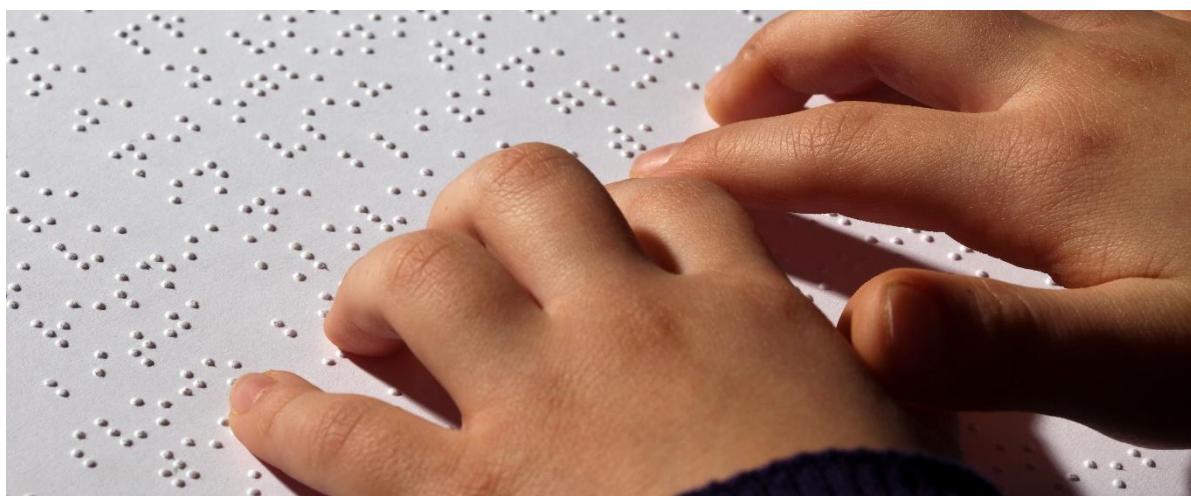
Diverse people can have various physical, mental and emotional health issues and care needs. People may require direct or indirect assistance to address these needs and may ask for your help or consideration. Workers such as yourself are expected to assist in facilitating access to these needs as part of their work duties.

The following are some examples of issues and needs of diverse people:

People With Disability

	Issues	Needs
Physical	People with disabilities often suffer from the lack of disability-friendly environments. When ramps, braille signs, and other similar considerations are not present in their environment, people with disabilities can have difficulty navigating and physically interacting with their surroundings.	People with disabilities need facilities that are necessary for employees who use wheelchairs, braces, artificial limbs, other assistive devices, or assistive animals. They need these so that they can perform normal functions without having to rely heavily on the assistance of others.
	People with disabilities suffer from the lack of available physical therapists. Physical disabilities often come with chronic pain problems. Thus, people with physical impairments who cannot access therapy services are exposed to more pain.	People with disabilities need access to physical therapists, doctors, physicians and medical professionals. They need to have access to medical care for the various symptoms and health problems that result from their disability.

	Issues	Needs
Mental	People with disabilities are often treated differently because of their physical state. This causes depression and other mental health disorders.	People with disabilities have an innate need to be treated normally. This can help in maintaining their confidence, self-image and mental well-being.
	People with disabilities from low-income families often have difficulty keeping up with the cost of physical therapy and fees from professionals such as psychiatrists.	People with disabilities need access to accessible and low-cost mental services. They also need financial assistance for other relevant expenses such as travel expenses, assistive devices, medication costs, etc.
Emotional	People with disabilities find that others will tend to interact with them with more sympathy and less dignity. This is demeaning and demoralising for someone who is not incapable or lacking in autonomy.	People with disabilities need to feel empowered or capable of living normal lives. They need others to be empathetic and not sympathetic, concerned but still respectful of what the person can do.
	People with disabilities find that others lack any understanding of the issues and trauma they go through. They find it difficult to express their difficulties and feel that others would not know how to help them even if they asked for assistance.	Others must understand the needs and issues of people with disabilities better. Communication assistance and awareness programs are needed for people with disabilities to express their points of view.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

	Issues	Needs
Physical	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders suffer from various physical ailments and disabilities. This is because there are very limited programs to get affordable treatment.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders need access to affordable and quality healthcare services that will remain respectful of their beliefs and culture.
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders experience abuse and neglect at the hands of their peers, service providers and others.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders require programs and support to prevent abuse and neglect. They need channels to express their concerns and relay their experiences safely.
Mental	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are continuously being treated as second-class citizens. This prevents them from accessing high-quality services, landing better-paying jobs, receiving a better education, etc.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders need to be treated with the same level of respect as other Australians. They need social institutions, organisations and the government to uphold anti-discrimination laws.
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have long suffered from systemic discrimination. This has resulted in an increased occurrence of depression and suicide.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders need to have access to mental health support. There must be awareness programs to address mental health concerns and prevent cases of suicide.
Emotional	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders still feel resentment for the Stolen Generations.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders need to feel connected with their kin, the environment, and their cultural roles and responsibilities.
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders suffer from misrepresentation in the media. They are often portrayed falsely or negatively in advertisements, TV shows and other forms of media.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders need a sense of ownership and awareness of their culture and history. This is achieved through a more respectful and accurate representation of the cultural group in all media forms.

Addressing these needs should be a priority for workers. This must be part of their organisation's consideration of the impact of various experiences involving discrimination, trauma, exclusion and negative attitudes on the lives of diverse people. The organisation must put effort into accommodating these people. There is no better way for an organisation to display its commitment and resolve to provide inclusive services than this.

You must also understand that negative experiences can cause a person to be on guard. This can affect your service level and may even cause difficulties in identifying other needs that need to be addressed.

Some examples of these negative experiences and their impact on a person are provided below:



▪ Discrimination

- Discrimination is the unjust and prejudicial treatment of a group of people.
- When a person is discriminated against, they are likely to stay distant from others. They might not make attempts at communication even with friendly people. This is because they expect to be discriminated against at every interaction.
- Victims of discrimination can be more conscious and have low confidence and self-esteem. They may resent their background or the unique traits that cause them to be discriminated against.

▪ Trauma

- Trauma refers to disturbing, distressing or extremely uncomfortable experiences.
- Traumatic events can affect a person's development. They may suddenly develop new behaviours, habits or traits to cope or adjust to the trauma they received.
- Trauma can cause other issues such as increased anxiety, depression, and suicide.

▪ **Exclusion**

- An exclusion means being removed from the bigger group.
- Exclusion leads to the total withdrawal of the affected party from certain groups and contexts. It can be the cause of hatred or resentment towards the larger group.
- Exclusion can also damage one's self-image and perception of their culture. People may resent their background due to the social difficulties it has caused them.



▪ **Violence**

- Violence refers to any force applied to a victim with the intent to cause harm.
- Unchecked violence exposes a victim to even greater forms of violence. This can lead to abuse, serious injury, and even death.
- Physical violence can cause emotional and mental damage, too. Even after healing physically, a person may become less capable or less autonomous. This is due to the mental or emotional strain they suffered.

▪ **Stigma and other negative attitudes**

- A stigma is a mark or negative image associated with a particular person or group.
- Being stigmatised and subject to negative attitudes leads to segregation from the bigger community.
- This can cause people to feel disempowered. Persons segregated from the bigger community may feel they are less knowledgeable or capable than others.
- This can damage a person's confidence and motivation.

An ideal, safe environment accounts for the needs of diverse people. Remember to account for all relevant issues and needs when deciding on work practices that you will use in the workplace.

2.3.3 Using Diversity Practices and Experiences

One way your workplace can provide a safe environment for diverse people is by using diverse practices and experiences. These practices and experiences are activities, either routine or occasional, that can do the following:

Improve the cultural awareness of all people in the workplace

Prevent conflicts and arguments due to differences in culture

Create opportunities to address existing issues and concerns

Allow everyone to stand on equal footing in terms of ideas and opinions

The following are examples of practices and experiences that your workplace can provide for you and your coworkers:

- **Elimination of racist remarks in the workplace**

This practice is necessary for allowing staff and management in the workplace to reflect on their personal biases towards people who are born in another country or who belong to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. It also prevents any unhealthy and dominant behaviours that staff or management in the workplace might have.



Removing racist remarks also helps staff and management in the workplace bond with people outside their culture. This sets the stage for an interpersonal relationship. The staff and management in the workplace must practice positive behaviour towards different races or ethnicities.

- **Hiring men and women equally**

Through this practice, workers will develop the mindset that a person's sex does not influence their job performance. Hiring workers regardless of their sex eliminates the stereotypical expectation of others. Some stereotypes are that men are for construction and engineering and that women are only for nurturing and caring.

People in a workplace where both sexes and people of varying genders are represented will see the workplace as a safe environment. The workplace must be where everyone is treated equally. This will allow everyone to pursue their career goals regardless of society's expectations.

- **Visiting museums and various exhibits**

Providing experiences that involve visiting museums and other exhibits will allow everyone to learn more about the culture and behaviours of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. People who go through these experiences can use what they learn to communicate properly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Museum visits and exhibits also help staff and management in the workplace to appreciate and respect indigenous groups' contributions. These help them form bonds with people from different ethnicities. These also allow workers to treat other people from diverse backgrounds as individuals who contribute uniquely to their community.

- **Team-building activities with employees from various backgrounds**

Experiences that promote other cultures allow the employees to recognise other peoples' similarities and differences. Sharing stories and engaging in team-building activities lead to an understanding that every individual, regardless of their culture, race, or ethnicity, has a significant contribution to their community.

Team-building activities also teach people to appreciate and celebrate cultural diversity and treat everyone as equals, without any form of aggression and dominant behaviour. This will play a role in eliminating stereotypes of other marginalised groups such as the Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

When choosing appropriate work practices and experiences, consider the backgrounds, traits and needs of the diverse people in your workplace and community. Always prioritise building personal awareness over setting hard guidelines or rules to restrict actions in the workplace. Remember that when diversity is involved, intentions mean everything.



Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Practising equity in a diverse workplace is giving special consideration to marginalised groups' needs. This involves safeguarding them from risk factors by providing various protective factors.
2. The organisation must put effort into accommodating people and providing for their needs. There is no better way for an organisation to display its commitment and resolve to provide inclusive services than this.
3. When choosing appropriate work practices and experiences, consider the backgrounds, traits and needs of the diverse people in your workplace and community. Always prioritise building personal awareness over setting hard guidelines or rules to restrict actions in the workplace.



Learning Activity for Chapter 2

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.



III. Communicate with People from Diverse Backgrounds and Situations



Communication is the exchange of information between two or more people through a predefined set of words, symbols or actions. Communication is performed day in and day out throughout all sectors of the world. Whether or not you may be aware of it, you are communicating practically 24/7. It is crucial in developing and maintaining relationships, relaying any concerns, and giving and receiving information.

In previous chapters, you learned that workers and clients often have diverse traits and identities. Individual persons bring their own beliefs, cultural values, customs, and even languages to daily interactions. Consequently, communicating with clients from diverse backgrounds challenges all workers. This is because it is important to gain the appropriate cultural knowledge and skills to address their specific needs.

Communicating between cultures is more than bridging language barriers. It is important to ensure that each communication's underlying meaning is clear and received as intended. It is also important to ensure that the non-verbal messages you send show that you value the individual and diversity.

3.1 Show Respect for Diversity in Communication With All People



In the previous chapters, it was emphasised that workers and all people in the workplace must show respect for the diverse traits and backgrounds of all people. Showing respect is best accomplished through proper and effective communication.

Communication is the exchange of information between two or more people through a predefined set of words, symbols or actions. It is the process of relaying information and being understood by the other person. A person can speak for a long time and still not be able to communicate, but it does not relay any information. Effective communication must relay information, and the other person understands what you are trying to communicate.

Showing respect means treating others with kindness and integrity. Respect develops the bond among workers. People are inclined to work better with someone who treats them with respect. One way to develop respect is to communicate in different ways. Diversity in communication refers to the different ways of communicating with the persons in your workplace. Diversity in communication is needed to communicate with people who:

- Are from a different nationality
- Are from a different culture and background
- Cannot speak verbally
- Have a disability
- Are impaired in hearing or sight
- Diagnosed with a condition or illness affecting speech
- Use English as their second language

To show respect for diversity in communication with all people, utilise the following:

- **Listen closely.**

Listening closely to others shows you respect them. It conveys that you stay focused on them and get their points.

- **Be mindful of sensitive words.**

Some words may be normal for you, but some cultures may find them offensive. Show respect by not using those words.

- **Use different ways of communication.**

Some people might have difficulty communicating verbally. You may use writing to show you want to communicate with them despite the barriers.

- **Be mindful of body language.**

The following are some common body languages you can use to show respect. Keep in mind that different cultures have different interpretations of body language. Only use the body language considered respectful by the person you are communicating with.

- **Facial expressions and eye contact**

Some facial expressions, like smiling, will help others feel comfortable. Generally, eye contact shows that you are interested in the person.

- **Gestures and movement**

Gestures and movements indicate if you are interested in the other person. Showing interest is a sign of respect for the other person. Gestures and movements include nodding the head, handshake and bowing.

- **Voice tone and volume**

Voice usually reveals the emotion of a person. Showing positive emotions is often a sign of respect and interest in others. By moderating the tone and volume of your voice, you can show positive emotions to the other person.

These ways will help you show respect to all people. They will help you communicate even with people who have difficulty communicating. People will feel respected when communicated with, despite their diversity in communication. They feel they are treated fairly.



Aboriginal English

Speaking uses *language*, which is a key aspect of culture. It reflects what is vital to members of a certain cultural group. For example, different languages have their unique way of classifying or describing events, conditions or thinking patterns.

Take the English language as an example. English is a language where thinking occurs linearly. Time markers are used when describing conditions or giving instructions. This includes '*do this first; then you take that*'. In other cultures, events or stories can involve weaving in and out of a theme. Some stories start from the final events or conclusions and work inward in a circular sequence to the beginning of the event.

The first language or home language of many Aboriginal people is Aboriginal English. This is a distinctive language, which is a powerful way through which Aboriginal identity is transmitted. Many Aboriginal languages are no longer spoken. Despite this, patterns and influences can be seen in the ways Aboriginal people speak English.

Dialects of English spoken by Aboriginal people have been given the name Aboriginal English, with different regional variations. Aboriginal English differs from Standard Australian English. They differ not only in words and meanings but also in grammar and ways of thinking and feeling. The language encompasses gestures, body language, eye contact, sounds, expressions and tone. It is through this language that Aboriginal children learn to communicate and function.

In most workplaces, the language spoken and used at work is Standard Australian English. Nothing about this language makes it better than any other form of English; it is simply the language spoken by the dominant group in Australia. Staff must recognise that Aboriginal clients and employees may speak a variant of Aboriginal English.



To show respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, you may use the following ways of communication:

- **Communicating face-to-face**

When communicating face-to-face, it is important to remember that the level of English understood varies from community to community and from individual to individual. Therefore, you may need to adjust your speaking style to enable full understanding.

- **Body language**

Always observe others when communicating and rely on local knowledge—particularly regarding eye contact and general body contact such as shaking hands and personal space.

Be aware that there are distinct boundaries between different genders and practice appropriate behaviour at all times.

- **Communicating in print**

Print may be a useful way to provide information to key stakeholders, influencers, and those with a medium to a high level of English proficiency.

- **Communicating online**

Social media is important for engaging and creating partnerships with other people whose messages and goals are closely aligned with your priorities.

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Non-English Speaking Persons

You may also come across clients who cannot or do not speak English. Many factors can make it difficult, and in some cases, almost impossible for a person to learn and speak English.

Sometimes, an individual may have the will to learn English but may not be able to do so due to the complexity of the task. Learning a new language is not an easy task. The ability to learn English can be affected by the sex, age, and marital status of the migrant. Younger migrants tend to become more proficient in English than older ones.



It is easier to learn English if it is similar to the person's first language. Most languages are more similar to English than others. Italian and German are languages that share a script and alphabet with English. They contain strong similarities between certain words. On the other hand, Japanese and Arabic contain no similarities to English. These languages have different alphabet systems and utilise differing sounds and words. It is harder to learn English when Japanese is your first language than when German or Italian is your first language.

Here are some strategies to adopt when working with culturally and/or linguistically diverse people and diverse backgrounds:

- Consider the language of choice. People from another linguistic background may not understand some slang or idioms.
- Take the time to understand the 'rules' relating to non-verbal communication. Understand particularly the areas of touching and the use of personal space.
- A colleague may not share English as a first language. Ensure you have given adequate time with communication to obtain feedback and clarify understanding.
- Avoid unnecessary or inappropriate references to culture by mentioning people's race, culture, ethnic group, or religion. This way of communicating shows that they are 'different' to the 'norm'.



Impact of Culture on Communication

Go back and try to remember your reflections about your culture. Try to find certain aspects of your culture that can affect people from diverse backgrounds, such as one with a disability or an immigrant from a non-English speaking country.

Chances are, you may have experiences where you found it difficult to communicate. They may be with someone with a disability that affects their speech or someone who was not as proficient as you in speaking English. A person may find it difficult to communicate for a variety of reasons.

Take, for example, a Hong Kong immigrant who has only been in the country for less than two months with little background in speaking English. This person can experience a multitude of barriers considering Australia's community attitude, language, policies, and structure.

Australians are individualistic, while people from East Asian nations are mostly collectivistic. Australians generally prefer to achieve goals alone. However, the people from Hong Kong are more attuned to collaboration and cooperation. This can lead to misunderstandings in the workplace.

The language difference would pose a problem in ensuring successful communication. They might become insecure and anxious every time a native speaker of English would suddenly begin a conversation. This can lead to misunderstandings. For example, the immigrant's silence may be interpreted wrongfully as a desire to be excluded from the people around them.



The difference in structures at work between a worker from Hong Kong and one from Australia can also pose some difficulties. Australia, in general, has a small power distance culture. While the people of Hong Kong respect guidelines and orders, Australians are more inclined to make their superiors and managers accessible and available for consultation. This can pose difficulty when immigrants from Hong Kong begin their work.

There are policies in place to help immigrants from other countries. Australia's Human Rights Commission Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in hiring because of a person's nationality. Immigrants have the right to equal employment opportunities as long as they have the necessary skills and experience.

As another example, consider an adult worker who is a native Australian. She has started developing degenerative hearing at her current age. While fitting in might not be a big issue, the individualistic attitude of most Australians may pose a problem, especially with her degenerating hearing. At her workplace, her manager must ensure that this person and their co-workers have enough resources to communicate and execute tasks efficiently.



The same can be said for the language barrier. With her degrading hearing, this person might find it difficult to communicate with co-workers and clients. There is the risk of hearing words wrong and misunderstandings arising in the workplace. Providing the worker with hearing aids and offering Auslan classes for the other workers should be available. These ensure that they will not have any issues communicating with people.

In terms of structure, Australia's small power distance culture allows the person to speak their mind. It will also allow them to make requests to make the workplace more accessible and friendly to the hearing impaired.

The current legislation does help in terms of fair treatment. The Human Rights Commission Act and the pieces of legislation discussed have made it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of their disability in many areas of life. These include education, getting or using services, and accessibility to public places. The current laws make it a criminal offence for people with disabilities to be marginalised or given unfavourable treatment. With these laws in place, any worker has the right to be a part of the workforce without any form of discrimination.

Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Aboriginal English is a distinctive language. It is a powerful way through which Aboriginal identity is transmitted.
2. It is easier to learn English if it is similar to your first language. A person whose first language is Japanese may struggle to learn English. In contrast, a person whose first language is German or Italian may find it easy.
3. Depending on a person's disability or country of origin, a person may find it difficult to communicate for a variety of reasons.

3.2 Using Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Constructively in the Workplace

The most appropriate and effective way to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from other cultures would be to go to their communities and meet in a place of their choosing. To do this, you must ensure an appropriate introduction to the community by seeking permission in advance. Access can be gained through primary organisations representing the community (councils and cooperatives), community elders, and local Aboriginal consultancy groups.

This could include assisting with preparation, providing advice, acting as interpreters, conducting interviews, and facilitating discussion groups.

3.2.1 Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Communication consists of both verbal expressions and non-verbal cues or actions. Both are important aspects of communication. All workers must learn these to regulate and control to provide culturally sensitive services.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication with diverse people significantly differs with people from your cultural group. Diverse people may have their verbal styles or preferences regarding pace, tone, word choice, and even politeness.

Some words and terminologies also have a history of being used to harass, insult or discriminate against people from diverse backgrounds. These hurtful words can damage a person's confidence, self-image or mood and lead to workplace conflicts.

Thus, when verbally communicating with people from diverse backgrounds, you have to be aware of their needs. You must also use the appropriate language. These involve the following:

- Choosing appropriate words
- Avoiding the use of discriminatory phrasing
- Using a tone and pace that matches the person's preferences



When in doubt, remember that it is always better to ask than to assume. You can always ask confirmation questions in the middle of your conversation. This is to check if the person finds your communication style proper. Such questions include the following:

- *Is my voice too loud or too soft for you?*
- *Did I use that word properly?*
- *Am I talking too fast or too slowly?*

The following are some general tips for successful communication:

- Only refer to the person's background or culture if necessary or relevant
- Speak directly to the person, rather than their family, carer or other persons with them
- Use a normal tone of voice
- Be patient and allow the person to think and form a reply
- Let the person know if you are having difficulty communicating with them—you can try asking yes or no questions
- Be flexible and reword phrases or sentences rather than repeating something which was not understood
- Ask the person what will aid with communication
- Offer your assistance if it appears necessary, but respect the person's wishes if they do not accept your offer
- Relax—apologise if you believe you have made a mistake



Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication will also be vital when working with diverse persons. Using appropriate non-verbal communication strategies can make any client or co-worker feel at ease.

Non-verbal communication strategies refer to ways that you can communicate without speaking. It involves the following:

- Maintaining or breaking eye contact
- Using hand gestures
- Using appropriate facial expressions
- Using visual cues such as pictures, graphs or signs
- Conveying an appropriate overall body language

Non-verbal communication strategies must match your verbal strategies to prevent confusion or miscommunication. In worst-case scenarios, a person may feel you are mocking them or being sarcastic if your verbal and non-verbal behaviour do not match.

Touching, such as patting someone's back or tapping someone's shoulder, is also one way of non-verbal communication. However, note that some people may feel that touching is intrusive or inappropriate. It will take some trial and error to learn when touch is appropriate and how to touch appropriately.

The following are other examples of non-verbal communication:

- **Emblems** or popular and easily identifiable signs, such as the *thumbs-up* sign
- **Illustrators** or signs that mimic what people speak. These include holding up a certain number of fingers and pointing to your wrist to signal the amount of time left in a meeting.
- **Regulators** or signs that convey meaning through the gesture alone. These include raising your hand to signify that you have a question about what was just said.
- **Affect displays** or gestures that reveal emotions, such as smiling to show happiness
- **Adaptors** or gestures that show your reaction, such as yawning to signal boredom or clenching your fists to signal anger
- **Proxemics** or ways of communicating by controlling space. Sitting close to a person can convey curiosity while sitting in a relaxed and wide position away from another person can convey power.



Written Language

Written language is part of non-verbal communication. It can refer to both the characters of the alphabet and the symbols and pictures people draw to convey meaning. Traffic signs are a common example of written language. Many signs have words, and many others have symbols, yet people know what signs of both types mean.

You will have to use written language to perform your job duties. Clients, coworkers and other people in your workplace will have a predefined set of the written language they will expect you to use. When communicating through written language, always remember the following considerations:

- Make sure that the content of the written text you are creating follows the same rules as your verbal language.
- When writing by hand, keep your text easy to read. Write legibly and use big letters or symbols for people with eyesight problems.
- Avoid using sarcasm in your written text. Note that humour and nuanced remarks may not always be effectively conveyed through written communication. The absence of accompanying non-verbal cues can lead to misinterpretation or misunderstanding.
- Your organisation should have policies and procedures for completing documentation and writing down any information. These policies and procedures can include rules for identifying errors in a document, using certain types of ink, affixing signatures, dates, or other identifiers on document pages and storing the documents electronically. You may refer to your organisation's policies and procedures for more information.



Using Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Here are some tips for using verbal and non-verbal communication in the workplace:

- Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and migrants may not speak, read, or write in English very well.
- Consider using alternative methods of communication. They may be pictures, sign language, or interpreters if available.
- Written information should include pictures to assist in communication. For example, a picture of the sun or moon could indicate day or night.
- Consider acknowledging sensitive questions right from the start. Beginning a conversation with *“Maybe it is a bit embarrassing to ask you about this...”* is likely to make the person feel more comfortable responding.
- Be mindful of questions that can seem intrusive. Answers of “yes” may not be accurate in some situations because the client may be attempting to take the path of least resistance through what is an uncomfortable situation for them.
- Avoiding eye contact is polite in some communities. Therefore, just because a family member or child is not looking at you does not mean they are not listening. This is particularly relevant for cross-gender interactions. Maintaining eye contact with the same sex is most often appropriate than that with the opposite sex.
- Be mindful of the message that your body language gives off.
- Avoid finishing sentences for people. This is because they may just be searching for the right English word to express what they are trying to communicate. Give them time to do this.
- Men’s and women’s business does exist in Aboriginal cultures. You may be facing a gender-related barrier if you’re having difficulty obtaining information. Where possible, it is recommended that services are provided by a staff member of the same gender.



3.2.2 Constructive Communication



Intercultural or cross-cultural communication refers to understanding the use of *non-verbal*, *oral*, and *written* messages to convey meaning. Workers like yourself use all three forms of communication in daily interactions with colleagues and clients. When workers use all three forms of communication effectively, they can communicate much more than just the ideas and concepts they are expressing. The perfect use of all forms of communication allows a worker to communicate emotions, feelings, values, encouragement and empowerment.

Sometimes, however, communication leads to conflicts with people from diverse backgrounds. This is unavoidable. There are many differences between cultures and even more between people within those cultures. You will never be 100% prepared to deal with any and every kind of person. Mistakes can happen, and sometimes, the fault would not even be on you but on the person you are communicating with.

In such cases, you will have to use constructive communication. *Constructive communication* is a style of communication used when addressing issues or resolving conflicts. It is a direct style of communication that aims to find the root cause of the issue and work towards a scenario where all parties are satisfied.

To communicate constructively, you must do the following:

- **Identify the problem and isolate it from the person.** Often, people tend to react and place all their negative emotions and ideas on the person instead of the problem at hand. This creates tension and makes the problem personal. Doing this will prevent any future progress as any solutions you offer can seem like attacks on the person. You must isolate the problem from the person through appropriate phrasing.
- **Focus on solving the problem instead of justifying past actions.** People have a natural tendency to defend their actions. However, when dealing with conflicts, all this would do is delay the resolution of the problem. You need to know how to move on from what happened and look forward to what should happen.

- **Be specific.** It can be easy to make generalisations when experiencing negative emotions (this is exactly how some prejudices and biases are formed!). Ask probing questions and get into specifics. Sometimes, differences between people are too small to notice. Other times, the differences are foundational. They can affect how persons interpret certain words or concepts altogether. By focusing on facts, you can get a better picture of the problem and the different elements that caused it or contributed to it.
- **Own up to your responsibility.** When sentences focus on the 'you', they tend to sound accusatory and argumentative. Using 'I' and 'me' lets you sound responsible and sincere in your endeavours.
- **Use active listening.** Active listening can help clear up misconceptions and identify underlying concerns. It involves doing the following:
 - Restating or paraphrasing what someone has said
 - Pausing and allowing the other person to think about what you have said before speaking again
 - Asking questions to clarify words or concepts that are unclear or vague to either you or the person you are talking to
 - Summarising the conversation before moving to the next point



The following are examples of what to say and what not to say when trying to resolve conflicts:

Instead of Saying	You Can Say
You keep saying you want that service option, but we just don't offer that here. Look at these other ones; maybe you'd like them.	The service option you have mentioned is not available here. Still, I can discuss the other available options to see if you would be open to choosing one of them instead.
We'd have known what to do if you had just notified us of your disability in the first place.	Next time, please notify me immediately if you have certain needs that would require me to provide you with assistance.
The service I provided was exactly what was expected of me. Everything I did was by the book—I really have no idea what I did wrong!	Please tell me about your concerns in detail. I'd like to know the events, actions or remarks that could have contributed to your feelings towards the service I provided.
You just said you were happy a minute ago, but now you're complaining about the service I gave. Why are you being difficult?	You seem upset by something that you heard or learned about just now. May I know what happened and what I can do to assist you?



Here are some other considerations to keep in mind when communicating constructively in order to resolve conflicts and issues:

Considerations	How They Are Used
Use non-verbal communication	<p>It is helpful to use keywords and non-verbal strategies such as using flashcards. They enhance communication with those who do not speak English well or not at all. Sign language can also work if there is an awareness of what is and is not appropriate and acceptable.</p> <p>Remember that making such an effort shows the person that you are committed to respecting and providing for their needs, even if you have differing opinions at the moment. This can aid in building trust and de-escalating situations.</p>
Speak slowly, not loudly	<p>A loud voice implies anger. When clients feel that a worker has become angry, they tend to become anxious, intimidated or angry. It is important to realise that speaking slowly conveys a more positive and appropriate meaning than speaking loudly.</p>
Use gestures, facial expressions, and pictures	<p>You must watch the person's face and body to look for inconsistencies between their body language and words. You must carefully double-check when a person's verbal and non-verbal communication does not match. In some cases, this can be a cultural trait; in others, this can be a way to make humorous remarks. However, you must not assume what this means. There is a possibility that this is also an attempt to communicate emergencies or circumstances that would require stronger intervention, e.g. abuse.</p> <p>You must also be ready to accommodate cultural beliefs and practices using pictures and illustrations. Aboriginal peoples, for example, have strict rules about using pictures or images depicting someone who has recently passed away. They also use totems, i.e. symbols represented in nature in the form of an animal, plant, or another object that are believed to be ancestrally related and sacred. Totems are a key part of Aboriginal culture and are widely depicted in their art. A person may, for example, associate with certain objects, such as identifying a spotted night jar as their father.</p>
Avoid uncommon and difficult words	<p>Use clear, direct statements instead of idioms. Be aware of some phrases or sayings that may make sense to you and people within your culture but not people from other cultures. Cultural references are one way to make your conversations more interesting. However, using them in the workplace only opens you up to conflicts, disagreements and issues due to misunderstanding. For example, using the term "<i>I got the munchies</i>" instead of saying "<i>I feel hungry</i>" may cause a person from a different culture to feel confused, insulted, or alienated.</p>

Organise what you say	Use short sentences, starting with the subject, followed as closely as possible with the simple object and/or verb. A rule of thumb is to remember that people tend to memorise information in an inverted bell curve. This means that what has been said from the beginning and at the end will be remembered best. In contrast, the middle conversation or information is quickly forgotten or missed. Put the information where it counts.
Avoid yes or no questions	Using yes or no questions will only tell you whether or not the question has been heard. This will not tell you whether it has been understood if the question is phrased in a way that requires the person to respond with information (i.e. by beginning questions with <i>what, where, when, why, or how</i>). They can only reply sensibly if they have understood the question. It is better to ask a question that requires information rather than a yes or no response. For example, using phrases like " <i>Tell me more about...</i> " is a better approach.



Outside of resolving conflicts and addressing issues, constructive communication can also provide the following benefits:

- **You and your client can develop mutual trust.**

Respect is something that is earned. As a worker, showing your willingness to adjust and accommodate the person's communication preferences can go a long way towards earning the person's respect and, later on, their trust. Adjusting to meet the needs and preferences of your client is a display of your trust in them. It shows that you trust them to work earnestly and honestly with you to ensure a respectful and cooperative atmosphere. When such an exchange of respect and trust happens, a mutual understanding between you and your client develops.

- **You and your client can establish a positive relationship.**

The trust you build with your client is the first step towards establishing a positive relationship. Remember that a client and a worker have roles and responsibilities in upholding an inclusive work atmosphere. Your relationship with your client can protect this relationship from slight disagreements or miscommunications. When you already trust a person, you are more likely to give them the benefit of the doubt and allow them to explain themselves. Such a relationship is invaluable in the workplace. A client and a worker who has a relationship built on respect and trust are more likely to identify problems, work towards goals and create good experiences more effectively.

- **You and your client can maintain confidence in one another.**

In the workplace, there is nothing greater than appreciation for your efforts and actions. For clients, there is nothing they'd wish for other than having someone who genuinely cares and understands them and their needs. A perfect scenario is one where a worker and a client are both confident of what can be provided by the other. In such a scenario, it is only natural to strive to maintain this confidence by communicating well to identify issues before they arise, working towards achieving long-term goals and keeping up with the client's changing needs.



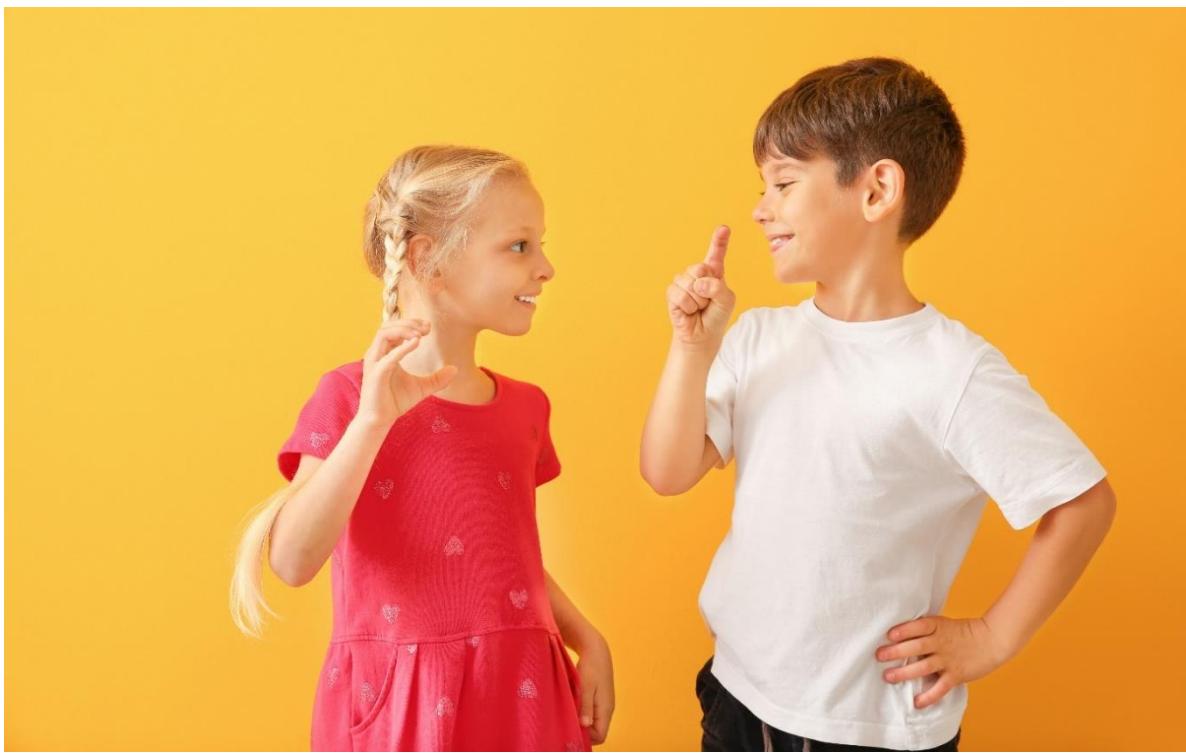
Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Verbal communication with diverse persons differs significantly with people from your cultural group. Diverse persons may have their verbal styles or preferences regarding pace, tone, word choice and even politeness.
2. Using appropriate non-verbal communication strategies can make any client or coworker feel at ease. Your non-verbal communication strategies must match your verbal strategies. This prevents confusion or miscommunication. In worst-case scenarios, a person may feel you are mocking them or being sarcastic if your verbal and non-verbal behaviour do not match.
3. Clients, coworkers and other people in your workplace will have a predefined or predetermined set of the written language they will expect you to use.
4. Constructive communication is a style of communication used when addressing issues or resolving conflicts. It is a direct style of communication that aims to find the root cause of the issue and work towards a scenario where all parties are satisfied.
5. A perfect scenario is one where a worker and a client are both confident of what can be provided by the other. In such a scenario, it is only natural to strive to maintain this confidence by communicating well to identify issues before they arise, working towards achieving long-term goals, and keeping up with the client's changing needs.



3.3 Where a Language Barrier Exists, Use Effective Strategies to Communicate in the Most Efficient Way Possible



A *language barrier* occurs when two people cannot communicate due to differences in their language. These commonly occur in workplaces with people from diverse backgrounds.

A language barrier does not necessarily mean that two people speak different languages while trying to make heads or tails of what the other person is saying. This oversimplification is less common now that more and more people are learning to speak English.

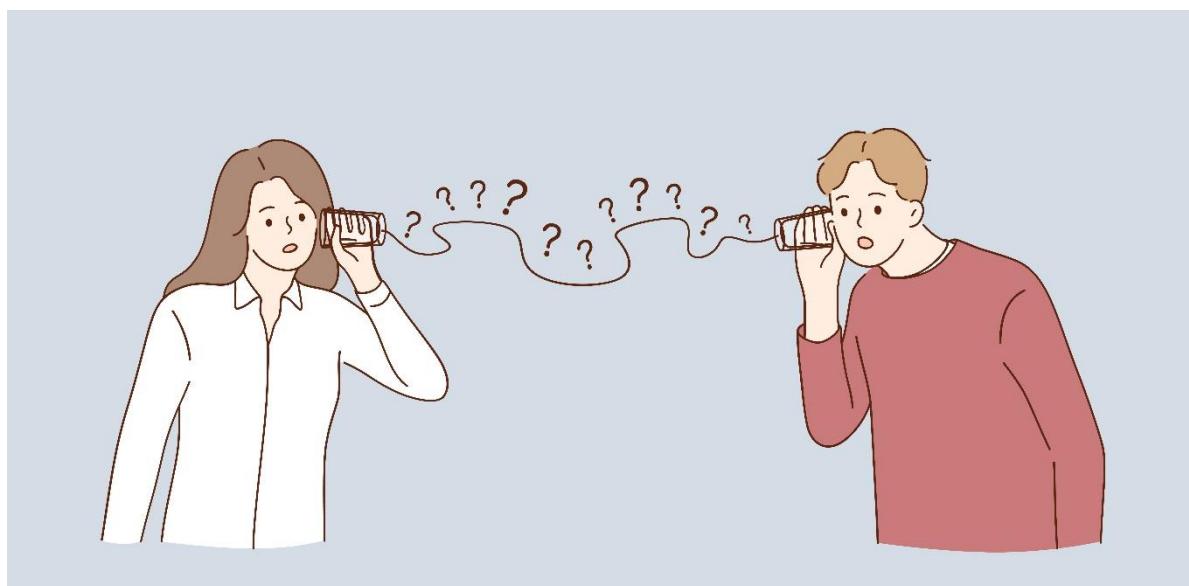
There are various types of language barriers that you may encounter in the workplace. The following are the most common types:

- **Physical language barrier.** Some people can have difficulty communicating because of physical impairments that cause them to speak or hear differently. Common examples of this kind of barrier include stuttering, hearing loss, and the inability to produce certain sounds.
- **Cultural language barrier.** This language barrier occurs when a concept is completely different between two cultures. An example would be using the phrase “*thank you*”. This phrase does not have any meaning for an Aboriginal person, as thanking someone is not a custom or practice in their culture. Another Australian may find the lack of this utterance or reception towards this gesture as insulting or offensive.

- **Proficiency language barrier.** This occurs when two people of varying proficiency levels in one language try to communicate. An example would be an international student with beginner-level proficiency in English trying to understand a professor of English literature during class. The difference between these two persons' proficiency levels should pose difficulties for both of them. The student would have a hard time understanding, while the professor would have a hard time getting the student to understand them.
- **Technical language barrier.** This is exclusive for people who need to discuss technical terminology and jargon. As the name implies, this kind of barrier occurs when a person tries to communicate with another using a set of words that only a certain group of professionals or workers would be familiar with. A good example would be a mechanic trying to talk to a lawyer about what they are legally obligated to do. If both the mechanic and the lawyer use words that only mechanics and lawyers would be familiar with, they are guaranteed to face a technical language barrier.

Organisations have different ways of minimising the effect of language barriers. The following are some examples that you might have noticed in your workplace:

- Using signs/posters that are written in different languages and show people from diverse backgrounds
- Providing brochures written in different languages
- Building opportunities for showcasing cultural differences where people of diverse cultures can build their confidence in interacting with others
- Having policies in place to ensure that all workers show a positive and helpful attitude when communicating, regardless of any linguistic differences



As a worker, you are also expected to provide service to clients despite language barriers. To do this, you will have to use strategies to overcome the language barrier between you and your client.

Your choice of strategies will depend on what kind of client you are working with, your organization's policies, and what your responsibilities are towards your client and your organisation. Depending on the strategy, you may need to use one or more of the following practices:

- **Be patient.** Sometimes, the only strategy needed is to be patient with the person. Some people are slow to communicate due to some physical impairment or their current level of proficiency in speaking a language. Letting them take their time and allowing them to think as they speak are good ways to overcome such barriers.
- **Build their vocabulary.** Technical and cultural language barriers can be overcome if you simply define key concepts and terminologies as you communicate with a client. Doing this will pay off in the long run as your client will have been assisted and educated simultaneously.
- **Ask questions.** You can ask questions to get a person to clarify what they are talking about. You can also ask questions from time to time to check if the other person understands you. When doing this, remember to ask open-ended questions and not questions answerable by yes or no.
- **Use repetition and routines.** People generally need to hear or say something multiple times before they can remember and truly understand it. Using a word repeatedly in communication will help build word familiarity for the person you are speaking to. Having routine conversations that use this word will allow that person to gain more confidence to use the word themselves in normal conversations.
- **Use visuals.** When words fail, images usually succeed. Visuals work because differences between languages are much greater than between sets of symbols and images for varying cultures. Using visuals can help provide context clues and direct definitions for people you speak with.
- **Seek assistance from interpreters, translators or other professionals.** When all other strategies fail, you may need to seek professional help. Head to the next subchapter for more information on how to do this.



The following are examples of how to select the appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication strategies when interacting with diverse people in the workplace:

- A co-worker is not responding appropriately to verbal questions and instructions. This results in miscommunication regarding what they need to do and when they need to do it. Rather than assuming that your co-worker is incapable of doing their job, you can try to check if they will respond to other forms of communication. You can continue to use the official language of your workplace. However, use regulators such as hand signals to try to emphasise important information, such as the exact time that something must be done or whether a task has been performed satisfactorily or not.
- A client is struggling to communicate in English. Before requesting a translator, you can use a brochure or other workplace resources that contain pictures of your products and services. You can direct the client to these images while continuing to discuss their options verbally.
- An elderly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client with Alzheimer's has difficulty keeping track of your conversations. The client has repeatedly inquired about several services for the past few days. They have become irritable due to not remembering agreements they made recently. You can assist this client by being patient. Creating notes or records of conversations for them can be a good way to assist them. You can also use routine questions to make them more comfortable around you and others in your workplace.

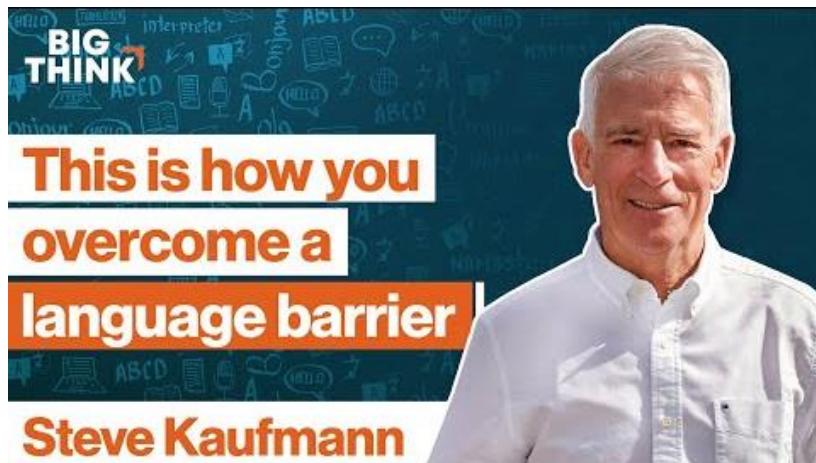




Multimedia

Watch the video below for general tips on overcoming language barriers.

[This is how you overcome a language barrier | Steve Kaufmann | Big Think](#)



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. A *language barrier* occurs when two people cannot communicate due to differences in their language. These commonly occur in workplaces with people from diverse backgrounds.
2. There are various types of language barriers. The following are the most common types of language barriers that you may encounter in the workplace:
 - Physical language barrier
 - Cultural language barrier
 - Proficiency language barrier
 - Technical language barrier
3. As a worker, you are also expected to provide service to clients despite language barriers. To do this, you will have to use strategies to overcome the language barrier between you and your client.



3.4 Seek Assistance From Interpreters or Other Persons According to Communication Needs



Bilingual staff, interpreters, outside interpreter services, volunteer community interpreters (through formal arrangement), and telephone services may be requested to assist persons from diverse backgrounds when a communication breakdown occurs.

In the workplace, your supervisor will provide you with assistance regarding any interpreters or professionals that will fully address your client's communication needs. Your organisation should also have policies and protocols for requesting assistance from these professionals. You may refer to your organisation's policies and procedures to check what you will be required to perform or submit to access such services.

There are also state bodies or organisations that can help you get access to services from interpreters and other relevant professionals.

- The National Interpreter Symbol is used throughout Australia. It helps people identify where to ask for language assistance when using a service.
- The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) is an interpreting service provided by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship for people who do not speak English and agencies that need to communicate with them.
- The majority of TIS National interpreting services are free for non-English speakers.
- For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander translation services, it is best to contact the local state government department responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. That is because they specialise in the local dialects and languages.

Using Interpreters to Respond to Various Needs

Language interpreters, cultural interpreters, and even the use of visual resources aid in making the diverse population feel more welcome.

Language interpretation is the process through which one expression or source of information provided through a particular language is expressed in a different language.

Language interpreters provide the following benefits in the workplace:

- They enable employees to understand and communicate better with co-workers who speak a different language, reducing miscommunication and fostering mutual respect.
- They are useful when a conflict needs to be settled that might arise due to differences in language, whether oral or sign language.
- They provide translations on a real-time basis. This allows workers to respond in near-real-time and make their responses and reactions appear more genuine.



On the other hand, *cultural interpretation* is a process where an interpreter facilitates the exchange of ideas and information between people from diverse backgrounds. Cultural interpreters are more ‘cultural experts’ than just interpreters. They are useful when employees or management must become culturally sensitive to their clients or coworkers. Having such interpreters provides the following benefits:

- They assist workers and employers in becoming more aware of their own culture as well as the culture of others.
- As mediators, they can help everyone respect and accept other people outside their immediate culture.
- They can account for and prevent unexpected differences in meaning and connotation that may arise during the conversation.
- They can explain why things are as they are. Their knowledge of culture lets them explain to all parties in an understandable and satisfactory way.

Visual resources are used by interpreters and ordinary workers in the workplace. They help make everyone from other cultures feel represented and recognised. This gives them the feeling of ownership and an acknowledgement that their culture matters. Visuals and other imageries turn complex information into easy-to-understand visual symbols and representations. Depending on the language barrier you must overcome, you may or may not need to use visual resources.

Assess Language Needs

Before requesting the help of an interpreter, it is important first to assess the actual language needs of your client. To do this, you must do the following:

Identify what information or text needs to be translated before speaking with the client.

Clarify what needs to be discussed, and ask for ideas on who can help interpret.

Identify jargon and other difficult concepts. As much as possible, though, you must avoid using jargon. Instead, use diagrams to assist with complex explanations.

List down some issues you may have identified or experienced in past interactions.

A wide assortment of multicultural service providers throughout Australia assists migrants and refugee communities in connecting with others. These service providers include community non-profit organisations in the local community and state multicultural government services. They can provide a range of support, depending on your organisation's needs. Each state also has a website to access information about services and organisations.

State/Territory	Multicultural Support Agencies
Northern Territory (NT)	Contact a multicultural service
New South Wales (NSW)	Multicultural NSW
Queensland (QLD)	Multicultural Affairs
Victoria (VIC)	Victorian Multicultural Commission
West Australia (WA)	Office of Multicultural Interests
South Australia (SA)	Multicultural affairs SA Directory of Community Services
Tasmania (TAS)	Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania

Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Bilingual staff, interpreters, outside interpreter services, volunteer community interpreters (through formal arrangement), and telephone services may be requested to assist during communication breakdown.
2. Language interpretation is the process through which one expression or source of information provided through a certain language is expressed in a different language. On the other hand, cultural interpretation is a process where an interpreter facilitates the exchange of ideas and information between people from diverse backgrounds and others.
3. Interpreters and ordinary workers use visual resources in the workplace to turn complex information into easy-to-understand visual symbols and representations. Depending on the language barrier you must overcome, you may or may not need to use visual resources.



Learning Activity for Chapter 3

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

IV. Promote Understanding Across Diverse Groups



Go back to the reflections you made in Chapter I. Part of your reflection dealt with your experiences that shaped how you think about or regard people of certain cultures. Your culture's teachings and your firsthand encounters with other people guided your understanding of certain cultural groups.

Now, think of what this could be like for someone from a different culture. Ask yourself the following questions:

What do you think were the teachings they received regarding other cultures?

What experiences did they have when interacting with you and others from your cultural group?

It was discussed that the cultures and histories of families and communities influence the development of their ideas, beliefs, and attitudes. People gradually learn the 'right' or accepted way to do things because this is what their culture identifies with. This belief that their own culture and cultural practices are the right or best ways is known as ethnocentrism.

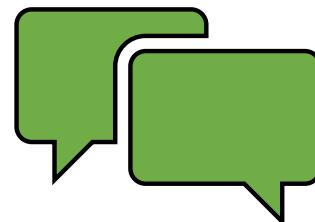
Ethnocentrism involves judging a different culture, practice, behaviour, or action using the standards of your own culture. It leads a person to make false assumptions about cultural differences, use generalisations that are unfounded or untrue, make decisions that are subjective and non-inclusive, and come up with conclusions that are biased or prejudiced.

Ethnocentrism, whether on your part or the client, must be avoided at all costs. Throughout this chapter, you will learn how to promote understanding when interacting with diverse people in the workplace.



4.1 Identify Issues That May Cause Communication Misunderstandings or Other Difficulties

In Chapter III, you learnt the different communication techniques and barriers that may arise from linguistic differences. In the workplace, it will be much easier to work with someone who speaks a different language than someone who is communicating with difficulty due to unknown issues. You already know what to do in the case of the former. In this subchapter and the next ones, you will learn what to do when attempting to provide services for the latter.



Outside of language differences, many factors can contribute to the difficulties in communication experienced by your client. Some common issues are provided below:

- **Not having a clear goal or objective.** Sometimes, a person would communicate without first having a clear idea of why they are communicating in the first place. Not having a clear goal makes it difficult for a worker to understand whether the client is satisfied with the communication experience or if the client is waiting for input or reactions from the worker. As a support worker, you must be clear in relaying your concerns. Ask whether the client needs assistance with anything. Moreover, be direct in questioning them about what exactly they expect from the interaction.
- **Lack of empowerment.** Many people from diverse backgrounds do not feel empowered. These people may not have the resources they need to communicate effectively, the encouragement from others that they can do well in communicating their ideas, or the training and instruction to do certain things that will help them reach their goals. As a support worker, you will need to take the initiative when you feel your client is not empowered. Offer your assistance immediately. Give the client the resources and instruction they need to boost their self-confidence.
- **Lack of listening or speaking skills.** Sometimes, it's not just language proficiency that poses a problem for the client. In many instances, the total lack of listening or speaking skills can get in the way of proper communication. This can happen in a variety of ways, such as when a person is more excited to respond than to listen or when a person cares more about making the conversation into a competition of sorts (e.g. "*That's a great story, but I have an even better one!*"), and when a person is unwilling to listen and communicate (e.g. "*I'm not speaking with you unless you bring me what I want*"). In such cases, it can be beneficial for you to slow down and ask probing questions to see if your client can keep up with the flow of information.

As you can see, these issues are more behavioural than linguistic. Negative behaviours such as those above can make communication more difficult. Still, they are also relatively easy to work around. One basic thing to remember is that as a worker, you know more about communication, diversity and different relevant factors than the person you are communicating with. Whatever happens, you will be expected to be the bigger person. You need to have more patience and understanding during your conversations.

In some cases, the underlying issues are more complex and deeply rooted. In Section 2.1.3 of this learner guide, you already saw how some societal issues continue to affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. People of other cultures may also have similar issues that prevent them from communicating effectively with you and other people in your workplace.



Racism

Racism is a prevalent issue for many people of diverse backgrounds in Australia. It is broadly defined as those attitudes, judgments, discriminatory behaviours, and institutional practices that disadvantaged groups of people defined by their 'race' or 'ethnicity'. You must also recognise that sexism, homophobia, religious beliefs, and ableism are essentially linked with racism but are separate problems in their own right.

Stereotypes and prejudice are terms often related to the concept of racism. *Stereotypes* are majority-held beliefs about social groups and can either be positive (e.g. The French are supposedly good cooks) or negative (e.g. The British are supposedly big drinkers).

Prejudice can be any attitude, emotion or judgment about people from a certain cultural group based on a generalisation being applied to their group. It is commonly used to refer to a negative prejudgment.

Racism can be a direct or an indirect form of discrimination. It can occur at an individual, institutional, and cultural level.

- Racism can be a direct form of discrimination. This can happen when a person is treated less favourably than another and unequally by others. This may be because of their race, ethnicity, national origins, nationality or colour. Racial abuse is a form of direct racism. Some examples include recruitment, promotion, and retention at the workplace.
- Racism can be an indirect form of discrimination. This can happen when racism affects practices or policies which may seem fair at first sight. However, in effect, they either intentionally or more often unintentionally result in discrimination against a minority ethnic group or groups.

Other Forms of Discrimination

As you have learned in the previous chapters, discrimination can be based on factors aside from race. A person can be discriminated against due to a medical condition, physical impairment, disability, age, gender, gender role, social status and other factors. Discrimination can affect how a person communicates when the person being discriminated against suffers from trauma or is made to feel unwelcome in social situations.



Discrimination does not always occur with the majority group using their numbers and influence to affect the lives of people in the minority group. Sometimes, minority groups can discriminate against people from other minority groups. This can be more damaging than being discriminated against by the majority group. For instance, Australians with mental disorders or impairments may be more severely affected when they are criticised or excluded by people with disabilities that are more apparent or visually noticeable than when they are discriminated against by some random people who do not share their struggles and pains. When this happens, communication can become extremely difficult. The person may be reluctant to engage in an exchange of ideas due to a damaged self-image and low levels of self-esteem.

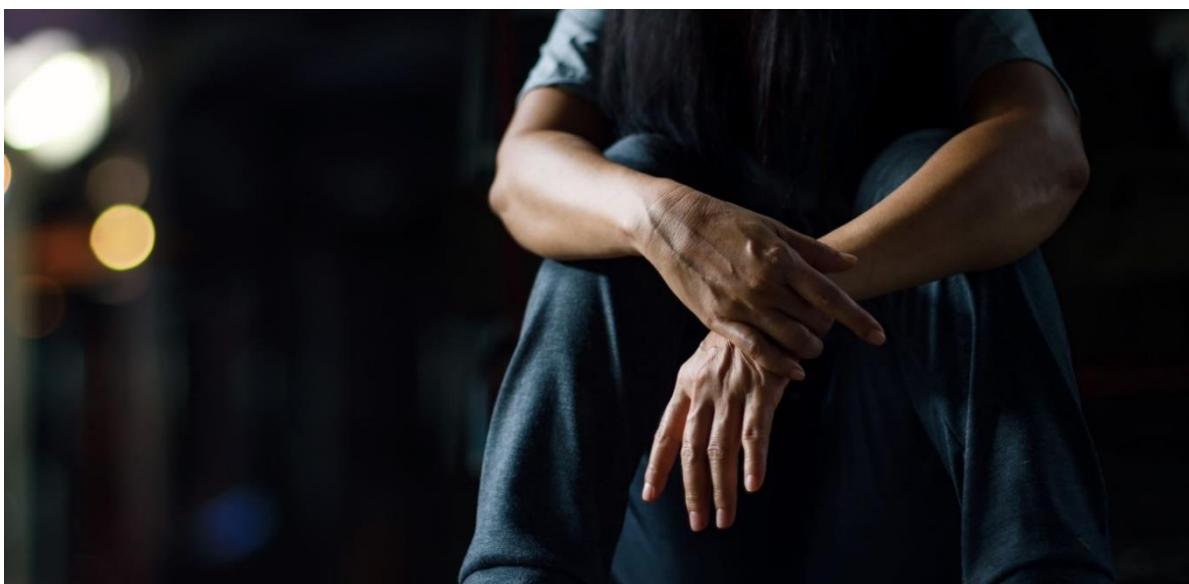
The following are examples of how racism and discrimination can cause issues during communication between people of differing backgrounds and characteristics:

- Cultural and physical differences between people of different racial backgrounds play a large role in exclusion and bullying, even in the workplace. For example, a female Aboriginal worker can be excluded from social or friendly conversations due to her skin colour and ancestry. This worker will find it difficult to participate actively in company activities. They may also find it difficult to request assistance when difficulties arise.
- Perceptions of sexual and gender identity will differ between persons of varying cultural backgrounds. For example, people from traditional backgrounds, even those from other minority groups, will refuse to consider a transgender person transitioning from female to male as another male person. This may happen regardless of how well they know the person and their past experiences.

- While not widely discussed, ageism is a pressing workplace issue. People nearing or past the retiring age are treated very differently compared to persons of the ideal working ages. For example, a 59-year-old worker may experience being left out of important decision-making meetings and may be assigned menial tasks. These may put them away from others due to opinions about her being unqualified or incapable of doing her job well and communicating effectively with others due to her age.
- People with disabilities, even those in the workplace, are often the target of discrimination. This is because it is easy for others to perceive them as helpless. For instance, a person with Down syndrome may be reluctant to communicate due to past experiences where they have been ridiculed every time they attempted humour or tried to engage in colourful communication with others.

Aside from racism and discrimination, various real-life issues can affect how effectively a client from a diverse background can communicate. These real-life issues can include the following:

- Trauma and mental health concerns
- Lack of cultural awareness
- Segregation and isolation
- Abuse and neglect
- Lack of proper support systems



Consider the following scenarios involving different issues that you may encounter in the workplace. For each scenario, check whether the issue is caused by discrimination or by other issues:

- A Korean immigrant was recently hired to work at your workplace. Other workers tease her behind her back about her appearance and her poor English. This led her to be hateful of how she looked. It lowered her confidence and self-esteem and discouraged her from interacting openly with people outside her immediate culture.
- Four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were recently hired to work in your organisation. They are friendly and well-trained, and all four have the required qualifications. The other workers, however, discourage clients from speaking with the four, calling them inferior and less qualified. Being rejected by their peers led the four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers to withdraw from social activities at work. This affected their ability to perform their job responsibilities. It also created animosity between them and other workers and a negative atmosphere that drove away clients. They also developed some resentment toward their culture and background. This may be because they start believing their culture and background are the primary reasons for their social exclusion.



- Your organisation recently accommodated a former army medic who migrated to the country because of war. This new employee still shows signs of trauma. They were constantly irritable and angry during conversations. They also had little to no appetite and had problems focusing on simple tasks or keeping up with discussions. Over time, it became apparent that their traumatic experiences affected their brain development. The worker is now at an increased risk of anxiety, depression, and suicide.
- A newly opened workplace created separate areas for clients from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, believing that these clients need more assistance than others. The segregation caused the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients to feel disempowered. They believed themselves to be less knowledgeable or less capable than others. The segregation affected their confidence and motivation and prevented them from communicating their opinions, ideas, insights, and preferences. This, in turn, prevented the workers in charge of assisting them from providing appropriate high-quality service.
- Your female coworker has started to show up to work wearing long clothing. When asked about it, it was found that she was hiding swelling and bruises all over her body. Despite your coworker refusing to talk, you reported the incident, knowing that your coworker might be at risk of serious injury and even death. After recovering, it became apparent that your coworker's emotional and mental states had been compromised. In addition, their ability to communicate confidently and perform their work effectively has been negatively affected.



Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Outside of language differences, many factors can contribute to the difficulties in communication experienced by your client. Some common issues are provided below:
 - Not having a clear goal or objective
 - Lack of empowerment
 - Lack of listening or speaking skills
2. *Stereotypes* are majority-held beliefs about social groups and can be positive or negative. *Prejudice* can be defined as any negative attitude, emotion or judgment about people from a certain cultural group based on a generalisation being applied to their group.
3. Discrimination does not always occur with the majority group using their numbers and influence to affect the lives of people in the minority group. Sometimes, minority groups can discriminate against people from other minority groups.



4.2 Where Difficulties or Misunderstandings Occur, Consider the Impact of Social and Cultural Diversity



Your job will certainly expose you to situations where a coworker and a client experience difficulties and misunderstandings. There are many different reasons these can occur. In previous subchapters, you have already learned how to address such issues by identifying language barriers and social issues affecting the person.

In some cases, issues can occur despite no communication difficulties or external issues affecting a client's ability to communicate. Sometimes, difficulties and misunderstandings can occur simply due to social and cultural diversity. Such instances can occur when your co-worker and the client come from different backgrounds.

When faced with this difficulty, you will have to act as a mediator and assist both parties in coming to an agreement or resolution. As a mediator, you must assist both parties in understanding why they are experiencing difficulties or misunderstandings. This includes helping them realise that the difference in their cultures is doing the following:

- Influencing their attitudes
- Affecting the way that they perceive or understand certain concepts
- Causing them to communicate in an inconsistent or incompatible manner
- Influencing the level of respect that they give to their communication partner
- Affecting how they see their power relations

When mediating between two arguing parties, remember to do the following:

- **Get both parties to relax.** This can involve having them take some time to cool off or inviting them to sit down with you. Emotions play a very important role in conflict resolution. Relaxed parties will be more open to listening and reconsidering their ideas.
- **Have ground rules in place.** Set some rules for all communication before letting the conversation continue. These rules should allow for a clearer and safer exchange of ideas. Refer to the constructive communication practices provided in Section 3.2.2 for more information.
- **Have each person speak in turns.** Do not allow one person to interrupt another. Sometimes, interrupting or cutting off another person can make a person appear disrespectful, argumentative and incapable of communicating properly. Assist both sides to make sure that both parties talk more appropriately.
- **Work on a compromise.** In conflict situations, both parties may not get what they sought to receive. Your job as a mediator will be to check for a middle ground, where both parties will have some consolation for what had occurred.
- **Explore issues together.** Sometimes, all that's needed is an explanation of what started the argument. Getting to the root cause can become easier if an impartial mediator is willing to listen and analyse the events leading to the conflict. You, as the mediator, will have to guide the discussion to get to this root cause and provide an explanation that protects the dignity and rights of both parties.



When mediating between two arguing parties, try asking the following questions:

- What words or statements did you take offence to?
- What actions or non-verbal cues did you find inappropriate, insensitive or insulting?
- What topics were discussed that you find inappropriate to discuss?
- What other aspects or elements of communication did you find inappropriate?
- What do those words, actions, topics and elements of communication mean to you regarding your cultural or social identity?
- How did your community's social structure and systems affect how you understood and received information from the other person?
- How did your culture's traits and characteristics affect how you communicated with another person?

Consider the Impact of Social Diversity

Considering the impact of social diversity is considering differences in society and community when difficulties or misunderstandings occur. Some actions are considered normal in a community but not in others. Your social perspectives and biases may cause these actions. Take into account the following actions that may cause difficulties or misunderstandings:

- Making a hasty generalisation of a society or community
- Using inappropriately a picture depicting a certain community
- Addressing a community wrongly
- Discrediting the importance of a community



Consider the Impact of Cultural Diversity

Considering the impact of cultural diversity is considering cultural differences when difficulties or misunderstandings occur. Your cultural perspectives and biases may cause conflict. Cultures have different beliefs, practices and ideals. There may be actions that are considered insulting to others. The same actions may convey different meanings to different cultures.

Take into account the following actions in considering the impact of cultural diversity that may cause difficulties or misunderstandings:

- Commenting on a person's culture
- Disrespecting others' values and beliefs
- Misinterpreting cultural practice
- Speaking or acting in a way that is offensive to another culture



Multimedia

The video below provides plenty of information on mediation in the workplace, as well as examples of how mediation is used to resolve conflict.

[Workplace Mediation Online Showcase](#)



In mediation, your initial response to the conflict situation is usually the most critical. This sets the tone for any following discussions during the mediation process. Here are some common examples of initial responses in conflict situations:

- A client and a coworker are arguing over the agreed price of a product. The client insists that they would purchase the product if they can negotiate its price, while your coworker insists that the set price is fair and consistent with the standard market value. In this case, you may suspect that both parties are referring to different things. The client may come from a culture where haggling and negotiating prices are common. On the other hand, your coworker may not understand this. They may think that the client is questioning the organisation's business practices. You must step between these two parties and help them understand where the other is coming from. You can lead things off by saying, *"I think there has been a misunderstanding. Let's pause and try to clarify what each of you is trying to say..."*

- Two coworkers are having difficulty picking an appropriate colour for a product they are preparing for delivery. One of your coworkers insists that the colour should be bright and vibrant to '*draw in luck*'. Your other coworker insists that the colour must be whatever the client wants. This is a situation where you have to side with one of your coworkers, but you will still have to be careful. Comments about beliefs can lead to bigger arguments. Thus, you must provide an explanation that respects your coworker's ideas about lucky colours. You can say, "*I understand why you want to use that colour, but have you thought about what the client would think if we did this?*"
- Your coworker and your supervisor are arguing about the use of workplace resources. Your coworker, who comes from an indigenous background, insists that these should be available to everyone. They also insisted that they should be allowed to use these resources whenever they need them. However, your supervisor insists that there are policies and procedures in place for accessing these resources and that everyone must comply with them even if it causes delays. It is easy to misread this situation and regard your coworker as stubborn. However, you must still try to identify why this coworker is stubborn. This coworker may be from a culture where items and belongings are shared more freely. Depending on their background and experiences, they may also suspect that they are being discriminated against or that the resources are being kept away from them intentionally. You will have to respond to this situation carefully. You can start by retracing what has happened and helping your coworker express their thoughts and feelings. Say, "*Let's try to step back and understand what's going on. Can we start over by remembering what happened and going over what you felt at that time?*"



Building awareness and good practices in others are just as important as resolving conflicts and finding a solution or compromise to a misunderstanding. By building an awareness of the various impact of a person's social or cultural characteristics on their communication, you can prevent other similar instances from occurring in the future.

A safe environment for free and respectful communication can be created where there is a sincere desire to help one another. Treating colleagues and clients with respect, being open to compromise, acting with empathy, finding common ground, using active listening, and numerous other approaches will facilitate the development of trust, the creation of positive relationships and the formation of work practices and values that form the foundation for an inclusive and supportive work environment.

Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. In some instances, you will have to act as a mediator and assist both parties in reaching an agreement or resolution. As a mediator, you must assist both parties in understanding exactly why they are experiencing difficulties or misunderstandings.
2. Sometimes, all that is needed is an explanation of what started the argument. Getting to the root cause can become easier if an impartial mediator is willing to listen and analyse the events leading to the conflict.
3. By building an awareness of the various impact of a person's social or cultural characteristics on their communication, you can prevent other similar instances from occurring in the future.



4.3 Make an Effort to Sensitively Resolve Differences, Taking Account of Diversity Considerations

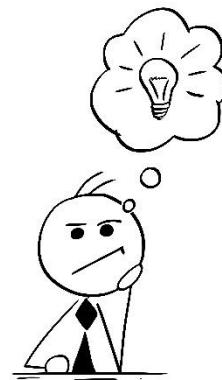
When resolving conflicts involving differences in culture, *how* you resolve the issue is just as important as *what* your resolution is. Remember that upholding a person's dignity and rights is just as relevant as clearing up any misunderstanding.

An insensitive resolution to a conflict is one where a person, whether a client or a coworker:

- Is forcibly made to conform to the other person's culture by using actions that do not conform with their own culture
- Has their cultural traits and characteristics identified as the source of the problem
- Is made to feel that they should make significant changes to their way of communicating or interacting with others
- Is insulted and made to feel less of a person than others

When resolving differences, you can take account of diversity considerations by asking yourself the following questions:

- Is the solution you have in mind fair for all parties involved?
- Is this solution respectful of the person's age, disability, education, race, gender, sexual identity, language, societal role or ethnic background?
- Is the solution discriminatory? Would you use this same solution if you assisted a person from a different background?
- Are there aspects of this solution that may damage the self-image or self-confidence of a person from a diverse background?
- Are all aspects of this solution optimised to address the client's physical, mental, social or spiritual needs?



Your effort in ensuring that any solution is sensitive can provide the following benefits:

- Your client will be more appreciative of your effort to make them comfortable.
- Your coworkers will know to put the client's needs first in all undertakings.
- Your organisation will not receive any legal or ethical complaints regarding discriminatory practices or negative experiences where clients were treated unfairly.
- You will have valuable experiences that you can use for further reflection and for forming personalised work practices.

Problem Solving Strategies

When resolving differences, you will have to assist people in identifying problems. The following are some general steps you can follow to solve problems in the workplace:

Step	Stage	Description
1	Identify the problem	Identify what the issue is or what is required.
2	Break down the problem into its basics	Check the facts involved. Breaking down the problem into smaller pieces can help you see each step necessary to find the solution.
3	Think of possible solutions	Create a mind map of what needs to happen. Think of the different ways to address the smaller problems. This will involve some creativity, flexibility and openness.
4	Evaluate the possibilities	You must judge the pros and cons of each possible solution and identify the probable outcomes. Identify which solution is more effective, more efficient, or easier to implement.
5	Select a solution	You must decide on which solution would be the best one to implement. Remember that you must adhere to your organisation's policies and procedures.
6	Create a plan	List the steps you need to take. Decide on the specifics – the persons assigned to do tasks and when or where the task needs to be performed. Remember to take into account the resources that you will need.
7	Implement and monitor the plan	Follow the plan. When you encounter problems, identify the causes of issues and develop a revised plan. Focus on improving solutions that do not address the problem at hand. Avoid reacting on impulse and using solutions that are not thought through.
8	Evaluation	Check if the plan was effective. Ask the staff involved about their experiences and the difficulties they encountered. Identify changes that would make the plan more effective.

Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. When resolving conflicts involving cultural differences, remember that upholding a person's dignity and rights is just as relevant as clearing up any misunderstanding.
2. Your effort in ensuring that any solution is sensitive can ensure that your organisation will not receive any legal or ethical complaints regarding discriminatory practices or negative experiences where clients were treated unfairly.
3. When checking the effectiveness of a plan, ask the staff involved about their experiences and the difficulties they encountered. Ask for information about possible changes that would make the plan more effective.



4.4 Address Any Difficulties With Appropriate People and Seek Assistance When Required

As a worker, you may find yourself in a position where you do not have all of the resources or support that you need to perform your job properly. You might find yourself in difficult spots where you cannot solve a problem safely. You may also find that solutions to certain problems are beyond your ability to implement. Sometimes, you will simply make mistakes and may need someone's help to correct them.

As much as possible, you must think of solutions to resolve difficulties. However, there might be situations when you cannot fix the problem on your own. Some of these situations that may require assistance are the following:

A person threatens or intimidates you

The situation is beyond your role to handle

There are communication barriers

The person does not want to negotiate or listen to you

Your and others' safety is at risk

The person is from a cultural or social background you are not familiar with

There are many challenges and difficulties that you may not be prepared for or may not have the authorisation to address. In such cases, you will have to address these difficulties by seeking the assistance of other people in your workplace.

- Your supervisor can assist you with making adjustments to schedules, evaluating your performance, giving advice or directions on how to resolve difficult problems, resolving disputes between coworkers, identifying workflow or workload issues and approving discounts or refunds.
- Human resources personnel can assist you with creating opportunities for training and development, providing explanations on any of the organisation's policies and procedures, addressing issues with compensations and benefits and hiring other people to fill in gaps in the workplace.
- Equipment managers or custodians can assist you with checking on certain tools and equipment availability, getting access to materials you may need to resolve issues and understanding how certain equipment is used.
- Other coworkers can assist you in getting a fresh perspective on a certain problem. They can also help identify possible solutions and implement action plans.

When seeking assistance from others, remember to do the following:

- Choose the appropriate person. Depending on the issue, you may need to ask for help from more than one other person in your workplace.
- Make sure to check the person's availability before asking for their help. Set appointments or send an email to ask for a meeting if necessary.
- Provide them with a summary of the problem, the solutions you implemented, the difficulties you encountered and the issues that continue to persist.
- Be specific with your request. Provide important details, such as dates, specific services, racial backgrounds, policies and products involved.
- Collaborate with the person. Do not hand off the problem to the person. Work with them instead to resolve the problem at hand.

Remember that you are in a diverse workplace. You will have many coworkers and colleagues with different specialisations, backgrounds, and experiences. Use this to your advantage, work together as a team, and bring out the best in each other!



Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. There are many challenges and difficulties that you may not be prepared for or may not have the authorisation to address. In such cases, you will have to address these difficulties by seeking the assistance of other people in your workplace.
2. When seeking assistance from others, make sure to check their availability before asking for help. Send an email for an appointment or meeting if necessary.
3. Collaborate with others. Do not hand off the problem to someone else—work with them to resolve the problem at hand.



Learning Activity for Chapter 4

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.



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