

CULTURAL SAFETY AND RESPONSIVENESS



In this tool, you will find:

- » How to create and maintain a culturally safe service
- » The culturally responsive actions you can take when working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- » Links to useful information and resources.

Two important aspects of culturally safe service delivery are how the CaFIS service is provided, but also how it is *experienced* by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who access it.

A framework for cultural responsiveness

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) has developed a framework, [Cultural Responsiveness in Action: An IAHA Framework](#), that identifies six capabilities that are important for individuals and organisations working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. These are set out in Table 1.

KEY GUIDANCE

Cultural safety and cultural responsiveness

Cultural safety in the CaFIS context means creating and maintaining a service that is safe and accessible for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Cultural responsiveness describes the actions that are practiced to create and maintain a culturally safe service.

Table 1: IAHA Cultural Responsiveness Capabilities Framework

Capability	Focus
Respect for the centrality of cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures– Valuing the unique cultural lens that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce bring to organisations– Understanding and respecting diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities– Understanding dominant cultures and privilege that impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Understanding our own cultures and impact on others, understanding our assumptions, beliefs and attitudes and their impact on others– Being open to changing behaviours and practices– Challenging our own assumptions, beliefs and attitudes that contribute to personal and institutional racism.
Proactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Taking responsibility for our own capability development in cultural responsiveness– Addressing all forms of racism– Taking strengths-based and nation-building approaches to practice– Transforming practice through personal and organisational initiatives and innovations.

Capability	Focus
Inclusive engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Appreciating and implementing processes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination and leadership – Developing respectful communication and engagement strategies that are a cultural match with communities – Encouraging community development solutions – Establishing respectful and equal partnerships in decision making.
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Leading by example – vision and values in cultural responsiveness are visible to others – Inspiring others in cultural responsiveness and cultivating a shared vision – Using strengths-based, solution-focused approaches to demonstrate leadership that transforms governance, accountability and relationships that include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – Influencing change and transformation in building culturally responsive practice and environments.
Responsibility and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Setting and achieving shared goals and targets in cultural responsiveness – Embedding cultural responsiveness in organisational goals and targets – Having accountability to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities – Understanding and working within a social justice and rights-based framework.

Source: Indigenous Allied Health Australia, 2019, pp. 11-13.

APPLICATION TO CaFIS PROVIDERS

CaFIS providers need to consider how to create and maintain a culturally safe service. One way to do this might be to create a plan to build the cultural responsiveness of the organisation and individuals involved in the delivery of CaFIS, by identifying actions you will take against each of the six capability areas in IAHA's Framework.

Some key questions for organisations and individuals involved in the CaFIS program, that have been adapted from IAHA's Framework, could include:

- » What actions can we take to ensure our organisation is culturally responsive?
- » How can we support our staff involved in the delivery of CaFIS to strengthen their cultural responsiveness?
- » How can we develop our knowledge of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities and use this knowledge to improve the cultural responsiveness of our CaFIS service, as well as access to the service?
- » How can we involve community members in the delivery of the CaFIS service, including learning from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people what the most effective ways to work with community are?
- » How can we work in partnership with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individuals, families, communities and organisations?
- » How can we include Aboriginal concepts of cultural, social and emotional wellbeing in the way we deliver our CaFIS service?

- » How can we act on our commitment to self-determination for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people?
- » How can we ensure our CaFIS service takes a strengths-based approach?
- » How can we ensure our CaFIS service identifies and eliminates any racism?

Disclaimer

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Where to go for more information on this topic

[Cultural Responsiveness in Action: An IAHA Framework](#) provides practical strategies to strengthen the capabilities of individuals and organisations that work with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. IAHA is a national, member-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health organisation and provides training and support to the health and community sectors.

[Keeping our Kids Safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) is a resource to support organisations engaging with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children to implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in a culturally safe way. The resource was developed by SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency for the Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.