



Cultural Safety Policy

Preamble

Culture can be determined by many things including, but not limited to:

- Where a person was born (their birthplace)
- A person’s background and where they are “from” (their ancestry or ethnic or cultural heritage)
- What language or languages a person speaks and
- What religions or belief systems a person is affiliated with

Australia is one of the most multi-cultural countries in the world and the NT population exemplifies this most strongly. At 30 June 2016:

- There were an estimated 74,546 Aboriginal people living in the NT, which represents 30.3% of the NT’s population, the majority of whom (~80%) live in remote and very remote regions.

Around 85% of Aboriginal people in the NT identify with a clan, tribal or language group and more than half (54%) also speak an Indigenous language as their main language – in many cases, speaking multiple Indigenous languages. The linguistic diversity of Aboriginal Territorians shows in the more than 100 Aboriginal languages spoken and the high proportion of the people who speak a language other than English as their main language spoken at home. Aboriginal languages vary greatly in their grammatical structures, concepts and vocabulary.

- Over 20% of the NT population was born overseas and a further 8% had at least 1 overseas born parent. This complements earlier historical migration waves to the NT comprising Chinese, Afghan, Greek and Japanese people in the 1800 and 1900s. The NT is one of Australia’s most culturally diverse places. There are over 100 nationalities and around 50 social, cultural and religious organisations. In 2016, 67% of the NT’s current overseas born population was from a *Non-main English-speaking country* (NMESC)⁽¹⁾ of which migration from India, the Philippines, Nepal and Greece ranked highest.
- In total, around 30% of all Territorians speak a language other than English at home and ~4% spoke English not well or not at all. In addition to Aboriginal languages, the prime non-English languages spoken at home were Greek, Tagalog, Mandarin and Filipino. Language is not the only indicator of culture, but Healthy Living NT recognises that it is a significant contributor to a person’s cultural identity and ability to access services in a culturally safe environment.

Thus, with well over 45% of the NT population deriving from a non-English speaking culture, it is vital to address cultural needs and preferences of individuals when providing care and support. From an organisational viewpoint, culturally safe practices aim to meet the diverse and individualised needs of clients who come from, or identify with, another culture.



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(1) NMESC comprises people born in countries other than Canada, UK, USA, South Africa, Ireland and NZ.

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Quality care is not just about overlaying elements of a person’s cultural background onto their care. Empowering clients to actively participate in the care planning process is essential to providing a quality service. Letting clients know that they are valued, respected and understood, irrespective of their ethnicity or cultural differences should be at the forefront of care planning and delivery. It’s the recognition of the individual in us all.

Policy Statement

Healthy Living NT is a multicultural, multidisciplinary organisation operating in a variety of cultural contexts. Cultural Safety is the endorsed philosophy of Healthy Living NT for ensuring all clients and staff and others with whom we interact feel safe, respected and valued for their diversity. Healthy Living NT therefore needs to be culturally safe in its operations and expects all associated with Healthy Living NT to embrace cultural safety and respect for the diversity of our community.

Healthy Living NT is committed to serving the whole Territory community in all its diversity. We value and promote inclusive service provision treating clients and staff with dignity and respect. Our services seek to empower people to make their own informed choices free from bias

This is consistent with our organisational values, which guide the way we operate:

- To pursue excellence in all facets of Healthy Living NT’s operations, through:**
- Professionalism and ethical practice
 - Fairness, honesty, confidentiality and compassion
 - Mutual respect for all individuals, their roles and the organisation
 - Continuous improvement in all activities
 - Involvement with, and responsiveness to, community diversity
 - Working collaboratively

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all staff, Board Members, contractors and volunteers of Healthy Living NT
- all programs and services delivered by and being developed by Healthy Living NT and all personnel involved in their development and delivery.

Definitions

Cultural Awareness	Is the beginning step towards understanding that there is a difference
Cultural Sensitivity	Alerts people to the legitimacy of difference and begins a process of self-exploration as the powerful bearers of their own life experiences and realities and the impact this may have on others
Cultural Safety	Is an outcome that enables safe service to be defined by those that receive the service

Cultural Safety

Cultural safety is a philosophy and a way of operating that ensures all individuals and groups are treated with regard to their unique cultural needs and differences. It assumes the right to difference and calls for interactions that do not diminish, demean or disempower individuals on the basis of any perceived or actual difference. A person should feel safe to talk about their own unique world views and cultural values without feeling less important than others. Cultural safety is a way of working rather than specific knowledge about cultures.

The core business of the Healthy Living NT is provision of health and related services supporting the breadth of the NT community. As such this policy is overtly concerned with ensuring that our clients experience cultural safety from and within Healthy Living NT, however it is the right of all individuals to also expect culturally safe engagement in the course of their work or interactions with us.

To this end, Healthy Living NT endorses the following principles underpinning this policy:

- Just as there is no single non-Indigenous culture, there is no single Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Our interactions and practices acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous and other cultures, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Culture can be constructed to relate to more than ethnicity or language alone; it may be linked to socio-economic status, religion, gender, age, sexuality or disability.
- Staff of Healthy Living NT, and in particular our health educators, will strive to demonstrate and facilitate Cultural Safety in their professional encounters through adoption of the following cultural safety principles:

<p><i>Cultural Safety Principle 1 – Reflect on your own practice</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Reflection is defined as giving serious thought to one’s own character and actions. It is about self-awareness, being aware of how our own beliefs and values, families and community influence how we interact with others. • Consider peer review, feedback from colleagues and clients, debrief
<p><i>Cultural Safety Principle 2 – Minimise power differentials</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing the power relationships between yourself and the client. Working along side them or with them. It can involve negotiating and change to provide a service that doesn’t alienate the client from the organisation. • Is it possible for the client to make the decisions? If not why?
<p><i>Cultural Safety Principle 3 – Engage in genuine conversation and relationships</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships with the client, talking and engaging with the client to enable a deeper understanding of their unique cultural circumstances. • Two-way learning including sharing. • Fostering relationships with community workers, by acknowledging their vital role within the health system and health settings. Gain an understanding of their links both within the clinic and the community while also learning about their unique challenges and barriers within these setting. • LISTEN.....
<p><i>Cultural Safety Principle 4 – Understand the importance of history</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and acknowledging the role of history and impact on people and their lives • Learn the history of the community, people and families • Learn about your own personal history and how it has affected your life • Learn the history of the system that you work in and the impact it has had on the clients

Cultural Safety Principle 5 – Treat people regardless of their cultural or individual differences

- Do not demean, diminish or disempower others through your action.
- Respect diversity between cultures and individuals
- Acceptance of the right to hold differing world and other views

Cultural safety can also be enhanced through:

- Supporting language preferences, including acknowledging first languages.
- Use of interpreters and cultural / community workers.
- Providing information in a manner that is easily understandable, but noting that printed resources in language have limitations as clients may not have full written literacy.
- Acknowledging cultural preferences around medical interventions.
- Acknowledging cultural preferences around death and dying.
- Recognising food preferences including preparation and eating (e.g. Vegetarian, Halal or Kosher).
- Recognising and supporting dietary fasting periods, particularly associated with religious beliefs (e.g Ramadan, Greek Orthodox)
- Acknowledging and respecting religious practices and rites including those around responding to death/funerals and sorry business, coming of age, women's and men's business and cultural ceremony.
- Recognising preferred activities vs activities which may be culturally inappropriate.
- Acknowledging the preferred title of the individual or their preference of sexual identity.
- Recognising that a person's cultural background can influence their preference for how and who they engage with in the health system - cultural background, language, sex, clan or group.

Responsibilities implicit in this policy:

Healthy Living NT is responsible for:

- a. Providing access to timely and ongoing training in Cultural Safety and/or Cross Cultural Training,
- b. Taking steps to ensure consistent application of this policy
- c. Investigating allegations or complaints of breaches of this policy

Staff are responsible for:

- a. Being aware of policies and procedures in relation to Cultural Safety
- b. Conducting themselves in a culturally safe manner
- c. Attending ongoing training which facilitates an applied knowledge of Cultural Safety/Cross Cultural factors in our work environment.
- d. Applying themselves in a manner that adheres to the principles of Cultural safety
- e. Refraining from culturally unsafe practices and interactions, and where safe to do so, challenging potentially unsafe practices and interactions, including such things as stereotyping, discrimination, and racist, sexist or other demeaning and harmful commentary.

Responsibility for Policy

The Board of Diabetes Association of the NT Inc. is responsible for ensuring this policy is up to date and complied with.

Approval

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Sign off by: Chair of the Board



Signature:

Supporting Policies, Procedures and Documents

HLNT Ethical Practice Guide

HLNT Values

HLNT Clinical Governance Policy