

## CULTURAL SAFETY – Kathleen Martin

Cultural Safety is a term used to describe a way of working with people of different cultural backgrounds that does not diminish, demean or disempower someone ([Nursing Council of New Zealand 2009](#)).

It originated in New Zealand in 1988 at a Maori Nurses conference where concerns were raised about the safety of Maori Nurses in the Health System that made them feel unsafe because of their different cultural background and beliefs were under-valued. They also saw a number of clients who accessed the health service refuse to be treated because they felt intimidated and demeaned by staff because their views on health were different.

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.

In order to Achieve Cultural Safety you must first go through a 3 step process.

The first step is Cultural Awareness. Most individuals may have attended Cultural Awareness courses as part of their work or training. These courses are designed to make the individuals aware of the differences in the culture of the different groups that live in that area. Cultural Awareness courses differ from region to region and are adapted to meet the needs of the local groups.

Step 2 Cultural Sensitivity is about individuals becoming aware that their own beliefs, values, life experiences and realities are different to others and this may impact on how they view or treat the other person.

So when we have gone through the process of Cultural Awareness and have established Cultural Sensitivity in our own practises then we should be able to provide a Culturally Safe environment

### **Other Cultural Safety Frameworks:**

Janie Dade Smiths Cultural Safety Principles

1. Stand back, be quiet, listen, hear and wait.
2. Get to know the local community.
3. Be respectful at all times.
4. Find a local cultural mentor for advice and guidance.
5. Have an open heart.
6. Don't assume you know because you are experienced.
7. Communication in practice is king.
8. Don't participate in racist behaviour.
9. Learn to laugh at yourself and with others.
10. The health status.
11. Community control.
12. Be cognisant of the cycle of staffing.

Be patient, stand back, wait, listen, hear, don't judge and have an open heart. You will never be the expert and you alone will not 'save these people' so get over it now. The more you learn the more you will realise that you have much more to learn. (Janie Dade Smith, 2016, pg 148)

## **5 Common Cultural Safety Principles**

- To **reflect on your own practice** is a critical aspect of cultural safety practice.
- Need to **minimise the power differentials between yourself and your clients**
- **Engage in a conversation with the client** to learn a bit about them.
- **Undertake a process of decolonisation.**
- **Ensure that you do not diminish, demean or disempower others through your actions.**

(Taylor & Geurin, 2010. pg 15)

## **WHAT CAN I DO TO BE CULTURALLY SAFE**

- Understand that the values and beliefs of the dominant culture shape the practice and attitudes of the individual and service provider.
- Critical self-reflection – of the individuals on their practice. Thinking about an incident that has happened, did it have a good or bad outcome, how I handled it, what I should have done, what can I do next time to ensure a good outcome?
- Understanding the impact of colonisation and dispossession, and the historical and ongoing effects in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's everyday lives.
- Learning that cultural safety is the experience of the recipient of care or service, it's not defined by the service provider.
- Build relationships with your Aboriginal Colleagues and Elders. Watch, Listen and ask for guidance. These people are the real experts in their communities, not you.
- Exploring racism within the organisation and individually. Do not participate in racism.

(Council of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives, 2017)

## **REFERENCES:**

Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2009. "Te Kaunihera Tapuhi o Aotearoa", annual report 2009, [www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/index.php/content/.../Annual%20Report%202009.pdf](http://www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/index.php/content/.../Annual%20Report%202009.pdf) accessed 09/05/2019.

Smith JD 20016, *Australia's Rural, Remote and Indigenous Health: A Social Justice Perspective*, 3rd edition, Elsevier Australia, Chatswood, NSW.

K. & Guerin P. 2010, *Health Care and Indigenous Australians: cultural safety in practice*, Palgrave Macmillan, Melbourne

Council of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives, 2017  
<https://www.catsinam.org.au/> accessed 09/05/2018

