

September 2018

Meeting and Exceeding Cultural Safety in the Workplace

Workshop Report

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Introduction

PricewaterhouseCoopers Indigenous Consulting (PIC) was engaged by the Northern Territory (NT) Department of Health (DoH), Office of Disability (OoD) to deliver a series of cultural safety workshops and an associated resource toolkit targeted at mainstream disability service providers. The intention was to raise awareness and increase understanding of cultural safety and to give service providers practical strategies for the workplace.

A commonly used definition of cultural safety developed by Williams is ‘An environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together.’

In addition to this engagement PIC worked with the OoD as an Implementation Partner to deliver a number of projects to support the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in the NT.

PIC undertook extensive Community Planning across all regions, facilitated an Innovation Grants Program and activities to engage Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to encourage their understanding of, and participation in, the disability sector. As there was significant overlap and integration between projects, learnings from the work across the suite of projects informed our approach to this engagement. Work for all projects was undertaken between March 2017 through to July 2018.

As a part of the transition to the NDIS, service providers were required for the first time to become accredited using the *Northern Territory Quality and Safeguarding Framework*. The NT accreditation scheme places particular emphasis on culture through *Domain 5, Cultural Safety, Security and Competency*. (*NT Quality and Safeguarding Framework*). This emphasis is particularly important given that the Aboriginal population of the Northern Territory accounts for about one third of the population, a proportion 10 times higher than the national average. There have been long standing challenges for service provision to Aboriginal people with disabilities in remote communities, with distance, climate, culture, and language impacting the quality, frequency, certainty and cost of service delivery, and the achievement of positive outcomes for those most in need. A recently released publication by the First Peoples Disability Network estimates that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Australians have 2.1 times the likelihood of experiencing severe and profound disability compared to other Australians.

This engagement provided one of the first opportunities for the disability sector to come together as an industry group to focus on culturally safe service delivery and the specific requirements of Domain 5.

This document reports on the workshop series and key learnings. A resource toolkit which includes good practice examples gathered through the workshops is contained in a companion document.

Williams R (1999) Cultural safety what does it mean for our work practice? Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health 23(2) 213-214

Avery S (2018) Culture is Inclusion: Community Controlled the Way Forward. First People's Disability Network

Objectives

This work was designed to support mainstream disability service providers to become culturally safe and competent in order to meet the requirements of the *NT Quality and Safeguards Framework* in order to enable them deliver the best, person-centred services to NDIS participants.

The objective of this project was to deliver interactive workshops in all regional centres for interested service providers and to compile a resource toolkit. The purpose of the project was to ensure service providers had a good understanding of the requirements of Domain 5 and to support them in developing practical action plans. The workshops were broadly aligned to the scheduled roll out of the NDIS and timed for when service providers had, at a minimum, undertaken the self-assessment which was the first key step in moving towards accreditation.



Photo credit: PIC. Service providers represented a diverse range of organizations in each region with many participants meeting each other for the first time.

Methodology

All service providers had undertaken a self assessment for their organization using Domain 5, Cultural Safety, Security and Competence from the Northern Territory Quality and Safeguarding Framework. Most service providers had undertaken, or were in the process of arranging, for formal assessment with the Independent Assessors. The following considerations were used to develop the workshops:

Cultural safety continuum

A ‘strengths based’ approach was chosen following a scan and review of available cultural programs and resources. The continuum underpinned PICs approach and recognises that creating a culturally safe environment is a journey for many organizations, beginning with awareness raising, moving through building cultural competence and finally creating a sustainable workplace where cultural safety is part of the fabric of the business.



Diagram 1: PIC utilized a cultural framework that acknowledged that individuals and organizations move from cultural awareness to competence before they are able to build culturally safe and environments that are sustainable and embedded.

Development of workshop content

PIC, in consultation with the OoD identified five diverse service providers to participate in two hour individual mini-workshops. The workshops identified their current organisational context, level of engagement and key challenges in a safe and non-judgemental environment. This information was used to test ideas and to shape the workshop content to best meet their needs.

PIC would like to acknowledge the generous contribution of these organisations in sharing their journey openly and honestly. PIC also facilitated a session with Assessors to gather their impressions of the first round of assessment and to draw on their collective knowledge from work in other jurisdictions and in other adjacent sectors such as aged care and mental health. A number of ACCOs were interviewed to gather their perspectives on the experience of working with mainstream service providers.

Multiple perspectives

Service providers were encouraged to bring the responsible senior operational staff, any Aboriginal staff and Board members to the workshops and to bring any workforce data that they had available.

Methodology (continued)

Workshop content

The workshops included presentations, short videos, personal stories and group activities. An overview of the content of the workshops is outlined below:

High level assessment of their organisation creating a 'Dash Board' of key data and information summarising the cultural and gender make up of their Board, staff and participants/clients

Unpacking Domain 5

Overview of Aboriginal history and colonisation

A contextualisation of Aboriginal issues in the Northern Territory including Land Rights

Contemporary Aboriginal experience and impacts of Intergenerational Trauma and shared stories from a family perspective

Introduction to Unconscious Bias

Ideas for creating a culturally inclusive organisation and increasing Aboriginal voice at all levels.

Sharing of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) and best practice and networking opportunity

Development of an Action Plan for each service provider.

The full agenda for the Workshop can be found at Appendix A.



Photo credit: PIC. The workshops were highly interactive with significant sharing of experience between organizations.

Outcomes

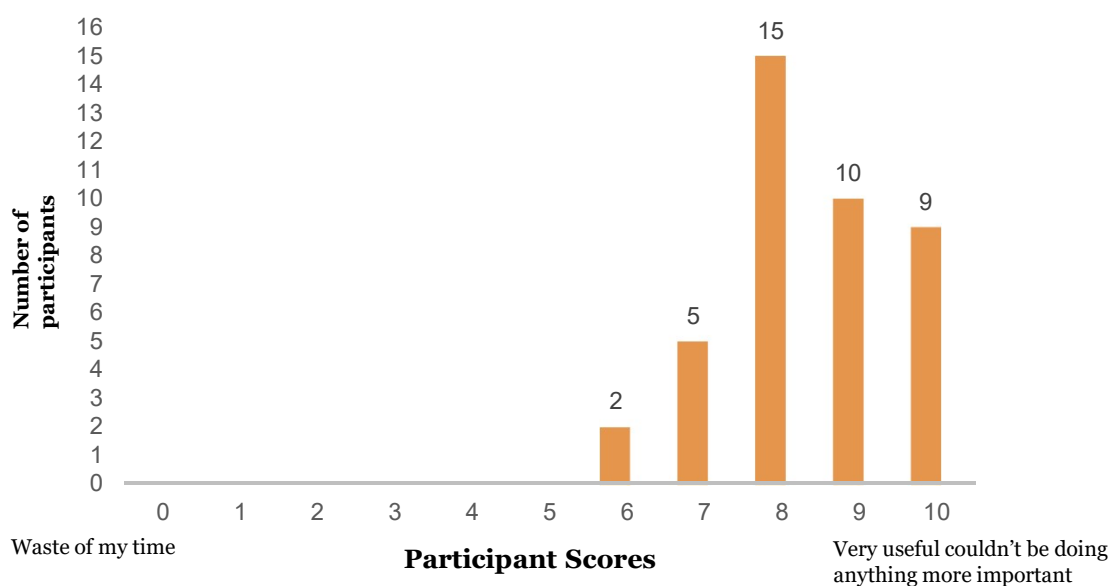
PIC delivered “Meeting and Exceeding Cultural Safety in the Workplace” workshops in five locations across the Northern Territory. A total of 67 participants representing 28 different disability service attended the workshops across the NT as summarized in the table below. A full listing of participating service providers can be found at Appendix B. Some larger organizations' chose to send multiple attendees to different locations and a number of participants were unable to attend for a full day due to other work commitments.

Locations	Dates	Participants
Darwin	18 May 2018	35
Tennant Creek	22 May 2018	2
Alice Springs	24 May 2018	10
Katherine	31 May 2018	17
Nhulunbuy	14 June 2018	3
Total		67

Table 1: Workshop locations, dates and participant numbers

Of the 61% who provided feedback, 80% rated the workshops between 8-10/10 as an important use of their time. A full summary of feedback comments can be found in Appendix C.

Evaluation of Workshop



Graph 1: Summary of participant feedback from combined workshops

Learnings

A number of themes and issues were raised at workshops across the NT.

Service Providers rated themselves at the Cultural Awareness end of the continuum

As a part of the workshop we asked service providers to rate where their organization was on the cultural journey. Most service providers self-rated their organization as being at the Cultural Awareness end of the continuum. The group discussions indicated a strong desire to build their capacity although some expressed that they did not know where to start in a practical sense.



Figure 1: Organizations begin by becoming aware of the need and then move through building cultural competency and safety until it is embedded in the fabric of the business

The focus of Domain 5 in the *NT Quality and Safeguarding Framework* has put cultural issues onto the agenda as we transition to the NDIS. While many service providers had RAPs, views regarding the impact on day to day practice were mixed. For a number of workshop participants, the workshops provided their first opportunity to engage with Domain 5, as others in their organization were leading the accreditation work. The workshops were a catalyst for conversations across different geographical locations between staff within a number of organizations.

Putting the client and their family at the centre

A person-centred approach to service delivery involves the individual being at the centre of decision-making and having control over the services they receive. This means that they are empowered to be able to recognise when their basic rights are not being respected and upheld. Participants at all workshops discussed the importance of deeply and respectfully listening to clients and their families and saw this as being at the core of building a culturally aware, competent and safe service. Service providers acknowledged the need to 'reach out' and be proactive where clients did not have connection with family or regular visitors to build connection.

An Aboriginal perspective in Disability Services is needed urgently

There are only a few ACCOs who have delivered disability services as the major part of their suite of services to date. Mainstream service providers also reported they currently had few Aboriginal Board members and in general they employed very small numbers of Aboriginal staff. The only exception was one service provider who had predominately Aboriginal staff delivering services in two remote locations. More flexibility and part time work options were discussed as providing the opportunity to engage Aboriginal staff in the workforce as a part of a targeted strategy. Acknowledging staff cultural skills and knowledge and remunerating them accordingly was also identified as a useful approach. For example, one provider suggested that providing a payroll loading for people who spoke Aboriginal languages may be beneficial in attracting and retaining staff.

Learnings (continued)

While it is acknowledged that both the aged care and disability sectors have difficulties generally and there is a engagement of Aboriginal staff. Alternative ways of ensuring an 'Aboriginal voice' in the organization both from the perspectives of governance and operational management were also explored. Suggestions included engaging cultural partners and advisors, partnering with ACCOs and creating work placements and graduate programs targeted at Aboriginal people. Mainstream disability service providers also have a key leadership role in supporting and working alongside ACCOs so they can become a part of the disability service sector and reciprocally, for mainstream service providers to benefit from ACCOs cultural authority and knowledge.

JBW1



Multicultural workforce.. a great starting point

Service providers reported high staff turnover within the sector with a substantial reliance on agency staff. In the NT context this is a highly mobile and diverse workforce from many different cultures. When building cultural safety, a good starting point is to start from the perspective of staff to build a culturally inclusive workforce. Celebrating different cultures significant events, creating two way learning opportunities and truly listening to each other and clients and their families. Building a calendar of a whole range of cultural events that incorporate the backgrounds of staff and participants was seen as a good way to get 'buy-in' from everyone.

Photo credit: PIC There is much to learn from each

Value of gathering and sharing easily accessible workforce data and cultural information

On the whole, few service providers could easily access data regarding their workforce and client based in terms of cultural background. If this data isn't known, accessible and tracked over time then it is unlikely that changes will become embedded within an organization.

Putting the client and their family at the center results in having to develop a much better understanding of people's backgrounds and their needs and desires. Use of interpreters is critical for clients who speak English as a second or third language and important so that cultural information is appropriately shared. Establishing an ongoing relationship with the Aboriginal Interpreter Service and through local Land Councils and key ACCOs was seen as an important strategy for disability service providers.

Cultural and Unconscious Bias Training ... finding the right match

Service Providers were aware of a range of different cross culture training options but identified the need for locally tailored cultural information and longer term relationships to enable this knowledge transfer. The high turnover of staff and use of agency staff presents particular challenges and highlighted the need for short introductory training.

Slide 10

JBW1 Not sure what you are trying to say here? "While it is acknowledged that both the aged care and disability sectors have difficulties generally and there is a engagement of Aboriginal staff"

Jessica B Whyte, 20/09/2018

Learnings (continued)

Although the general feedback was that Meeting and Exceeding Cultural Safety workshops were a good first step, service providers indicated they need to delve deeper into issues over an extended period of time. The Resource Toolkit contains materials presented at the workshops on Unconscious Bias and historical and current perspectives for Aboriginal Australians. The toolkit is intended for the use of disability service providers. Any cultural training needs to be contextualized to the local situation and Traditional Owners/Elders can make valuable contributions.

In conclusion

While there have been significant efforts taken to prepare for the NDIS over the past few years, the level of engagement of disability service providers has heightened recently as the new scheme has become a reality. Many service providers have been consumed with changing business processes and financial systems until this point. The focus on Domain 5 Cultural Safety and Competency within the *Northern Territory Quality and Safeguarding Framework* is both positive and timely. However, it is clear from this project that there is ongoing work to do with the disability service sector to fully realize the benefits of having a culturally safe environment for NDIS participants. There are many benefits from bringing together the sector to share and learn from each other and equally in advocating for the need to build this capacity over time wherever possible with the support and advice of ACCOs. A continued investment in the development of a culturally safe workforce would appear to be warranted and will be an important element in order for the NDIS to realize the benefits for participants.



Photo credit: PIC. Service Providers really valued the opportunity to share experience and build networks. Participants shared successful strategies used in other states and in associated sectors.

A *Appendix A: Workshop Agenda*



Meeting and Exceeding Cultural Safety in the Workplace Workshop

Time	Activity
8.30	Welcome and introduction of facilitators
8.35	Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners
8.40	Overview and our objectives
8.45	Office of Disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of today's workshop • Overview of the Quality and Safeguarding – Domain 5
8.55	Creating your own Organisation Dashboard – where are you on the journey?
9.15	Knowledge Capture Exercise 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we use technology better • Creating a culturally inclusive workplace • How do you build the Aboriginal voice in your organization • Attracting and retaining great staff
10.00	Morning Tea & Networking
10.30	Learning from PIC work with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation
10.45	Introduction to Unconscious Bias
11.30	Questions and discussion
12.00	Lunch
12.45	Introduction to Aboriginal History and Culture
1.15	Contemporary Aboriginal Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational trauma Table discussion - Feedback
1.40	What does a culturally safe, secure, and competent organization look like, feels like... Knowledge Capture Exercise 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended resources • Ideas to make the physical environment • Making disability an attractive viable career option • Keeping families connected
2.00	Afternoon Tea
2.15	Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs)
2.20	Action Planning
2.40	Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organisation have a RAP? Does it need one?
2.50	Action Plans
3.00	Key learnings and wrap up

B *Appendix B:* *List of Service Providers*





Service providers who attended the workshops

AARCS

Anglicare NT

Calvary Care

Carpentaria

Dementia NT

East Arnhem Regional Council

Eunoia Lane

Helping People Achieve (HPA)

Kalano

Golden Glow Nursing

Healthscope

Laynhapuy Homelands

Life Without Barriers

Lifestyle Solutions

Living Right

Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation

NDIS

No Limits Community

Northern Territory Government

NT Friendships

Safepathways

Somerville

Step Out

Team Health

Territory Carew and Support Services

Territory Therapy Solutions

Top End Allied Health

Total Recreation

C *Appendix C: Summary of Workshop Feedback*



Meeting and Exceeding Cultural Safety in the Workplace

Summary of Feedback



Comments

- Very interactive and enjoyable
- I enjoyed the workshop, also hearing others in the same area was very beneficial
- Would love access to the slides and resources
- Wonderful sharing from Jerome on a complex and important area, would love to see more CEOs and support workers attend this workshop
- Eddie Mabo could be included
- It was hard to watch the video of Aboriginal people being treated differently
- Thanks it was very helpful, a bit more on what a RAP could look like or ways of including these ideas in all polices would have been good
- Really enjoyed looking and hearing what other organisations are doing, thank you
- Really useful information and well presented
- A lot of information in the sessions after lunch
- Suggestion – start the day with the introduction to Aboriginal history
- Overall a great presentation and very useful information
- Great location, purposeful topics and great presenters
- Good content and helpful
- Very informative and the speakers are very amicable and rich in knowledge
- Great learning material and engaging
- Facilitators encouraged participation
- Great content and session times/ break times were sufficient
- Good catering
- Please cater for vegans
- Extend to a full day to allow more time for each other to share experiences and learn from each other
- Great facilitators
- Knowledgeable and interesting
- Well presented, good group engagement
- Left people with goals to work and learn more about
- Could have been more widely promoted, maybe people didn't read emails
- Knowledge of both presenters really on point
- Calm, friendly and good atmosphere
- Very valuable
- Very good workshop – lots of brainstorming and sharing/ interaction
- Fantastic, good that it was relevant to Katherine area
- Very worthwhile attending
- Was fantastic and loved the interaction, gained some great ideas to tackle back in the organisation
- Very useful information
- I feel like we have done a lot of work at Cultural Competency and Safety, but how do organisation express that in a way that is acceptable to the NDIS to show criteria has been met. Our organic policy from cultural interaction was sound and culturally appropriate and respectful but not acceptable for some reason
- Examples of frameworks for what people are expected to provide to show they are a culturally safe organisation would be very helpful
- Very informative seminar
- Enjoyed the workshop and networking
- Great day – interactive and good mix of information provided
- No vegan options apart from that great workshop
- More strategy tips would be good
- The consistent interaction of cultures was great
- The Unconscious Bias topic appeared to get everyone thinking
- Enjoyable day, great spirit and interaction
- So good to hear personal stories
- Wonderful session, would recommend to others in the future



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