

Cultural safety

Cultural safety involves creating an environment where individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds feel respected, valued, and understood within the context of their own cultural identity.

Cultural safety is necessary and foundational during program design, as it means that considerations of cultural diversity and inclusivity are integrated into every aspect of the program, from planning to implementation. This ensures that the program is not only accessible and relevant but also respectful and responsive to the cultural context of the community it serves.

Cultural safety goes beyond mere tolerance and acceptance of diverse cultures. While stating "we are tolerant and accept all people" is important, it differs significantly from "This has been built with you specifically in mind."

The latter statement recognises the unique needs, perspectives, and experiences of specific cultural groups, ensuring that programs, services, or initiatives are tailored to address those needs effectively.

Relevance to you

Prioritising cultural safety in all programs, regardless of their target audience, is essential for ensuring that all individuals have equal access to services and opportunities, regardless of cultural background. It promotes social cohesion, fosters trust and respect within communities, and leads to more inclusive and effective programs.

Not only is cultural safety an integral part of program design, but it is also something that needs to be evidenced when applying for Youth Justice Crime Prevention grants.

Relevance to Department of Youth Justice

Cultural safety is paramount for the Department of Youth Justice, particularly in funding crime prevention programs. By adopting a people-first approach and prioritising cultural safety, we uphold the well-being, dignity, and safety of young people. This approach ensures that our initiatives resonate with the unique cultural identities and needs of the communities we serve.

The Department of Youth Justice works with First Nations young people, families, and communities to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system. A range of funded programs have been developed with and for First Nations young people and their families to ensure they have access to culturally responsive supports that aim to address the factors which may lead to offending or re-offending.

Cultural safety in program design and grant applications



Building cultural safety into program design

When building cultural safety into your program design, it is essential to engage with the community in a respectful and inclusive manner to understand their needs and perspectives. This approach can take different forms depending on the level of involvement and collaboration.

Community consultation during design

- Community consultation involves seeking input from community members, groups, and stakeholders during the program design process.
- This engagement helps ensure the program aligns with the community's values, needs, and cultural considerations.
- This form of consultation provides opportunities for dialogue, feedback, and reflection, allowing you to incorporate community perspectives and address potential concerns.

Co-design

- Co-design is a collaborative process that involves working directly with community members, groups, and stakeholders to design the program together.
- This approach encourages equal partnership and shared decision-making, allowing for the integration of community expertise and lived experiences.
- Through co-design, you can create programs that are more responsive to the community's needs and cultural context.

Community-led design

- Community-led design takes collaboration a step further by empowering the community to take the lead in program design and decision-making.
- This approach recognises the community's agency and expertise, allowing them to guide the process based on their priorities and cultural context.
- Community-led design fosters ownership and accountability, leading to more sustainable and effective programs.

By incorporating these approaches, you can ensure your program design respects and reflects the community's diverse cultural perspectives and experiences, ultimately leading to more meaningful and impactful outcomes.

Incorporating cultural safety into program design involves embedding accountability to Community in all the below steps:

Acknowledging cultural identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising and respecting the cultural backgrounds, traditions, and practices of the target community or audience from the outset.
Engagement and consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively involving community members or representatives in the planning, development, and implementation stages to ensure their voices shape the program according to their needs.
Identifying service gaps and limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising gaps in your service abilities, such as the need for programs to be delivered by people of the same cultural background as the participants, cultural capability training, and proactively addressing these to enhance cultural safety.
Training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighting staff training in cultural capability and providing evidence of completion to ensure effective engagement with diverse cultural backgrounds.
Tailoring services to cultural needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting program delivery, language, content, and approaches to align with the cultural preferences, values, and sensitivities of the target audience.
Building trust and rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing trustful and meaningful relationships with community members by demonstrating genuine interest, empathy, and understanding of their cultural context. Recognising your own limitations and deferring to community leaders or Elders when appropriate can help build trust and rapport.
Continuous reflection and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committing to ongoing evaluation, feedback, and reflection to ensure that the program remains culturally safe and responsive to evolving community needs.

By emphasising cultural safety in your program, you demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity, equity, and respect for diversity. It shows that your project is not just about accommodating different cultures but *actively prioritising* the needs and well-being of specific cultural groups within your community.

Demonstrating cultural safety in delivery

Putting cultural safety into action during program delivery involves:

Engaging with the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively involving community members or representatives in program activities and decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard, valued and implemented.
Recognising and centring community expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deferring to the groups as experts in their own experiences, acknowledging their unique insights and perspectives when designing and delivering programs. It is crucial to recognise when outsiders may not be the appropriate facilitators, and to make space for cultural groups to lead their own self-determination.
Incorporating cultural practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing cultural protocols and practices that respect and integrate the cultural backgrounds, traditions, and preferences of the target community or audience. This may sometimes require collaborating with community members or cultural leaders to ensure authenticity and appropriateness. While outsiders may facilitate, it is crucial to recognise that community members are often best positioned to lead and inform program activities.

**Adapting
program
content**

- Tailoring program content, language, and approaches to align with the cultural sensitivities and needs of participants, fostering inclusivity and relevance. This may involve seeking guidance from cultural advisors or Elders to ensure cultural appropriateness and sensitivity.

**Continuous
improvement**

- Committing to ongoing reflection, feedback, and evaluation to enhance cultural safety and responsiveness throughout program delivery. This includes being open to feedback from community members and making necessary adjustments to ensure that programs are culturally safe and respectful.

**Community
accountability**

- Embedding processes to remain accountable to the community to ensure what you are delivering continues to hit the mark.

This approach ensures that cultural safety principles are embedded in every aspect of program delivery, promoting inclusivity, respect, and engagement while also making space for cultural groups to lead their own self-determination.