



Centre for
Cultural Diversity
in Ageing

Inclusive Service Standards

A resource for aged care services

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Acknowledgement

Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing acknowledges and pays respect to the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, on whose land this resource was developed.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their ancestors and elders, both past and present and acknowledge their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We hope our work contributes to the wider project of respect and recognition between cultures in Australia.

The Inclusive Service Standards was developed with Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) funding from the Australian Government Department of Health.

Contact us

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Email:
info@culturaldiversity.com.au

Inclusive Service Standards

A resource for aged care services

An inclusive approach focuses on adapting and improving current services and organisational practices so they are welcoming, safe and accessible for everyone.



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Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing

The Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing provides expertise in inclusive policy and practice for the aged care sector.

Our extensive experience has been in supporting the aged care sector develop policy and services for older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing website www.culturaldiversity.com.au is a key resource for consumers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their carers, as well as for the aged care sector. The website resources include links to multilingual health and aged care information, communication cards in 37 languages, bilingual staff directories and inclusive practice guides.



What are the Inclusive Service Standards

The Inclusive Service Standards provide a new framework that will support organisations on their journey to becoming truly inclusive for all consumers. The Inclusive Service Standards comprise three standards that guide organisations through articulating their commitment to inclusive services, developing systems that support inclusive services and ensuring that there is capacity to deliver inclusive services. The Inclusive Service Standards are designed to embed a systematic and holistic approach across organisations that recognise and appropriately respond to the breadth of a consumer's diversity.

Why aged care services need to consider how they address diversity

Our country is shaped by its evolving diversity. As our society continues to transform, it is important for service providers do the same. This requires us to move beyond siloed understandings of diversity and implement an approach that acknowledges our obligation and commitment to work with all consumers in an inclusive way.

Everyone's beliefs, traditions, values, relationships, identities, and histories are unique. Organisations that are not flexible and responsive to these characteristics create barriers for consumers. Barriers to access, quality outcomes and full participation occur when the policies, practices or procedures of an organisation intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against particular sections of the population or consumer group.

Addressing diversity will ensure that:

- systemic access barriers are removed;
- consumers are active participants in their service provision; and
- equitable outcomes are achieved.

Understanding diversity

Diversity is the vast array of differences that ensures, despite our collective humanness, no one person is the same as another. The spectrum of human diversity permeates the way in which individuals and communities experience the world, the way they self-define and the way they are defined by others. We are all shaped by personal characteristics, experiences, values and beliefs. People may experience and identify with multiple diversity characteristics requiring organisations to understand and take an intersectional approach when working with consumers. Intersectionality highlights a person's vast and varied diversity characteristics and acknowledges these characteristics are lived through an interconnected experience. Adopting an intersectional approach requires organisations to understand how multiple disadvantage or exclusion can be experienced by a person and challenges them to look past obvious or visible characteristics of a consumer.

An inclusive approach to addressing diversity

Inclusive service provision moves beyond viewing a consumer as a series of needs, stereotypes or one-dimensional diversity characteristics. It places all consumers at the centre, engaging them in their service provision, listening and responding to what is important to them.

The key principles of an inclusive approach include:

- commitment to understanding and addressing diversity in the broadest sense;
- holistic practice that supports the intersecting diversity characteristics of all consumers;
- informed knowledge of local community;
- sophisticated methods of identifying and removing systemic barriers;
- flexible, responsive and adaptable style when working with consumers; and
- robust systems that embed consistent practice through the organisation.

Addressing diversity through an inclusive approach may be new for many within aged care as there has often been a focus on specialised and individual responses to specific diversity characteristics. An inclusive approach focuses on adapting and improving current services and organisational practices so they are welcoming, safe and inclusive for everyone.

The purpose of the Inclusive Service Standards

The Inclusive Service Standards provide a structure through which aged care providers can embed inclusive practice across all policies, strategies and practices. Implementing the standards will ensure the quality of care and services offered by organisations meet community expectations. It will require that all consumers are actively engaged in the design, delivery and review of their services, supporting organisations to meet the requirements of consumer directed care.

Organisations that successfully embed the Inclusive Service Standards will:

- articulate their responsibility to address diversity in a holistic and systematic way;
- understand the diverse interest, goals and needs of consumers and respond supportively;
- empower consumers to make informed decisions about their service provision;
- deliver flexible, accessible services free of barriers and discrimination; and
- receive recognition from consumers, staff and volunteers.

Adopting this approach not only benefits consumers who will receive the best services, but will ensure aged care providers meet government expectations and standards.

Service responsibilities

As noted in the Single Aged Care Quality Framework, responding to the diversity of consumers and delivering inclusive services are not optional, desirable, niche or for specialist organisations. It is required of all aged care service providers, without exception.

All aged care services are expected to deliver care that is non-discriminatory and inclusive. Respecting a person's identity, culture and diversity also means:

- understanding an individual's needs and preferences
- providing care that is reflective of, and responsive to, their culture, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality, religion and spirituality.

In December 2017 the Australian Government Department of Health released Australia's Aged Care Diversity Framework which challenges the aged care system to embrace diverse characteristics and life experiences of older people. It explicitly highlights the need for aged care providers to move towards a more inclusive approach in the design and delivery of services.

These government frameworks are built upon the directions set out for aged care providers in the Aged Care Act 1997. The Act requires all aged care service providers to 'facilitate access to aged care services by those who need them, regardless of race, culture, language, gender, economic circumstance or geographic location' (the Act 201 [e]) and to 'encourage diverse, flexible and responsive aged care services that are appropriate to meet the needs of the recipients of those services and the cares of those recipients; and facilitate the independence of, and choice available to, those recipients and carers' (the Act 2-1 [g]).

The Act identifies nine special needs groups which aged care providers need to consider in the development and delivery of their services:

- people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- people who live in rural or remote areas;
- people who are financially or socially disadvantaged;
- veterans;
- people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless;
- care leavers;
- parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal; and
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

The Inclusive Service Standards will support organisations on their journey to becoming inclusive for all consumers. Taking an organisation-wide approach to implementing the standards will also support the successful application of consumer directed care and ensure organisations meet their legal and funding requirements.

Standard 1 - Commitment to inclusive services

The organisation clearly articulates its commitment to building an environment which responds to consumers' diversity and embeds inclusive service provision across all of its systems.

Criteria

1.1 Responsibility	1.2 Strategy	1.3 Policy and Procedure	1.4 Quality and Continuous Improvement
<p>The organisation is committed to its responsibility to develop and deliver services that ensure equitable access and quality outcomes for all consumers.</p>	<p>A commitment to inclusive service provision is embedded within the organisation's strategic plan.</p>	<p>An inclusive approach to service provision is embedded into the development and implementation of the organisation's policies and procedures.</p>	<p>The organisation's quality and continuous improvement initiatives include the monitoring of diversity and inclusion strategies.</p>

Examples of evidence

- Organisational documents such as commitment statements, strategic plans, policies and procedures demonstrate a commitment to inclusive service provision.
- Key performance indicators for management incorporate responsibilities in responding to and addressing diversity.
- Quality and continuous improvement processes document initiatives for achieving inclusive service provision.
- Staff recruitment collateral calls for employee commitment to inclusive service provision.

Standard 2 - Systems that support inclusive services

The organisation designs and implements services based on evidence derived from organisational reviews and consultation with stakeholders.

Criteria

2.1 Analysis	2.2 Stakeholder Engagement	2.3 Removing Barriers	2.4 Feedback
The organisation analyses its strengths, gaps, capabilities and readiness to implement and maintain an inclusive approach to service delivery.	The organisation has an inclusive stakeholder consultation process that informs planning and delivery of services.	The organisation identifies and responds to potential or real barriers and/or discriminatory practices faced by individual consumers.	The organisation has a robust system for receiving feedback from a diverse range of consumers and uses feedback to improve services.

Examples of evidence

- Stakeholder engagement outcomes reflect feedback from individuals and groups representing a diverse cross-section of the community.
- Service reviews identify barriers to equitable access and document strategies for removing barriers and addressing discriminatory practices.
- Consumer feedback processes adopt diverse methodologies aimed at maximising input from a broad range of consumers.

Standard 3 - Capacity building for inclusive services

The organisation's management and staff are equipped with knowledge, skills and resources required to plan and deliver inclusive services.

Criteria

3.1 Contemporary Knowledge	3.2 Performance and Skills	3.3 Training	3.4 Resources
<p>Management and staff are engaged with and use up-to-date diversity research, information, tools and resources to effectively respond to diversity.</p>	<p>All staff have skills to fulfil their responsibilities to implement inclusive practices.</p>	<p>Induction, training and on-going development reflects the organisational commitment to inclusive services.</p>	<p>The organisation invests in personnel, information and resources that support the development and implementation of inclusive service provision.</p>

Examples of evidence

- Key personnel with management responsibilities ensure that staff are kept up to date with resources and developments in the area of diversity and inclusion.
- All training offered at the organisation recognises the diversity of the consumer population.
- Staff are provided with access to online resources and training opportunities to assist them in developing inclusive practice skills and in meeting diverse consumer needs.

