



## Cultural safety

In the new Code of conduct, 'Principle 3: cultural practice and respectful relationships' begins with the value, 'Nurses engage with people as individuals in a culturally safe and respectful way, foster open, honest and compassionate professional relationships, and adhere to their obligations about privacy and confidentiality' <sup>1</sup>

### What is cultural safety?

Cultural safety is not treating everyone the same, but treating everyone equally in providing an environment that is 'spiritually, socially, emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people'. <sup>2</sup> The Code of conduct described in the glossary: 'Cultural safety represents a key philosophical shift from providing care regardless of difference, to care that takes account of peoples' unique needs'. <sup>3</sup> Cultural safety is the outcome where the person who receives the service defines their experience of the service as culturally safe and respectful. <sup>4,5</sup>

Cultural safety is a continuum of care beginning with cultural awareness which is the first learning process of understanding cultural differences, and then moving through cultural sensitivity where the person delivering care reflects on their own cultural identity and recognises the impact of their culture on their practice, before developing cultural competence then cultural safety. <sup>6</sup> This reflective process is a difficult but important part of cultural safety as the person examines not just their culture but their personal attitudes and beliefs about others and the influence this has on how they think, feel and behave. <sup>7,8</sup> It also recognises historical treatment of people and the effect of power differentials upon the delivery of care. <sup>9</sup> Depending on the setting or the community, you may be in a different part on the continuum. <sup>10</sup>

### Nurses and cultural safety

The chair of NMBA describes how many nurses are practising in a culturally safe and respectful way by challenging beliefs based on bias or assumption and working in partnership with people and communities. <sup>11</sup>

Read the code for more information on what this will look like in your practice as well as the glossary page 16. You may also be interested in the latest [Closing the Gap – Prime Minister's report](#) has just been released along with [10 year critical reflection](#) from the Australian Human Rights Commission on why governments haven't succeeded in closing the health gap.



## References

1. *Code of conduct for nurses*, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, Melbourne, p. 9.
2. Williams 1999 in QUT, Cultural safety, cultural connections for learning, Faculty of Health, QUT, 2013, viewed 1 March 2018 [http://www.intstudentsup.org/diversity/cultural\\_safety/](http://www.intstudentsup.org/diversity/cultural_safety/)
3. *Code of conduct for nurses*, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, Melbourne, p. 16.
4. Cultural safety framework summary, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association, ACT, p. 4, viewed 1 March 2018  
[https://www.natsihwa.org.au/sites/default/files/natsihwa-cultural\\_safety-framework\\_summary.pdf](https://www.natsihwa.org.au/sites/default/files/natsihwa-cultural_safety-framework_summary.pdf)
5. *Code of conduct for nurses*, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, Melbourne, p. 9. (3.2a)
6. Cultural safety framework summary, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association, ACT, p. 4-5, viewed 1 March 2018  
[https://www.natsihwa.org.au/sites/default/files/natsihwa-cultural\\_safety-framework\\_summary.pdf](https://www.natsihwa.org.au/sites/default/files/natsihwa-cultural_safety-framework_summary.pdf)
7. QUT, Cultural safety, cultural connections for learning, Faculty of Health, QUT, 2013, viewed 1 March 2018 [http://www.intstudentsup.org/diversity/cultural\\_safety/](http://www.intstudentsup.org/diversity/cultural_safety/)
8. *Code of conduct for nurses*, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, Melbourne, p. 9. (3.2c)
9. *Code of conduct for nurses*, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, Melbourne, p. 9. (3.1)
10. Cultural safety framework summary, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association, ACT, p. 5, viewed 1 March 2018  
[https://www.natsihwa.org.au/sites/default/files/natsihwa-cultural\\_safety-framework\\_summary.pdf](https://www.natsihwa.org.au/sites/default/files/natsihwa-cultural_safety-framework_summary.pdf)
11. Associate Prof Lynette Cusack RN in Chairs Message, News for Nurses and Midwives March 2018, NMBA

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