



THE AUSTRALASIAN
COLLEGE OF
PHLEBOLOGY

Cultural Safety Policy

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Cultural Safety Policy is to provide basic principles on how medical practitioners should approach Cultural Safety in their practice.

SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all members of the College.

THE POLICY

The policy expects that its members follow the Good Medical Practice Code of Conduct from AHPRA, specifically the following codes in relation to Cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and for all communities:

4.7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and cultural safety

4.7.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have inhabited and cared for the land as the first peoples of Australia for millennia, and their diverse histories and cultures have uniquely shaped our nation.

Aboriginal health means not just the physical wellbeing of an individual but refers to the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of the whole community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being, thereby bringing about the total wellbeing of their community. It is a whole-of-life view and includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life.

Understanding and acknowledging factors such as colonisation and its impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' health, helps inform care. In particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples bear the burden of gross social and health inequity. It is for these reasons that cultural safety in the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health needs to be specifically considered.

4.7.2 Cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Good medical practice supports the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, including cultural safety. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme's definition of cultural safety is as follows.

Cultural safety is determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities.

Culturally safe practice is the ongoing critical reflection of health practitioner knowledge, skills, attitudes, practising behaviours and power differentials in delivering safe, accessible and responsive healthcare free of racism.

To ensure culturally safe and respectful practice, medical practitioners must:

- a. Acknowledge colonisation and systemic racism, social, cultural, behavioural and economic factors which impact individual and community health;
- b. Acknowledge and address individual racism, their own biases, assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices and provide care that is holistic, free of bias and racism;
- c. Recognise the importance of self-determined decision-making, partnership and collaboration in healthcare which is driven by the individual, family and community;
- d. Foster a safe working environment through leadership to support the rights and dignity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and colleagues.

4.8 Cultural safety for all communities

Section 4.7 (above) defines cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples specifically for their status as First Nations Peoples. Culturally safe and respectful practice is also important for all communities.

Australia is a culturally and linguistically diverse nation.

Culturally safe practice requires you to understand how your own culture, values, attitudes, assumptions and beliefs influence your interactions with patients and their families, the community, colleagues and team members.

Culturally safe care acknowledges the social, economic, cultural, historic and behavioural factors influencing the health of individuals, communities and populations. It is characterised by respect for the diverse cultures, beliefs, gender identities, sexualities and experiences of people, including patients and their families, colleagues and team members.

Cultural safety involves understanding what individual patients and/or their family believe is culturally safe.

Culturally safe and respectful practice requires genuine efforts to adapt your practice as needed, to respect diversity and avoid bias, discrimination and racism. It also involves challenging assumptions that may be based on, for example, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, age or political beliefs.

Culturally safe practice, like all good medical practice, does not require doctors to provide care that is medically unsafe or inappropriate.

Doctors can create a positive, inclusive, culturally safe work environment by practising in a way that is culturally safe and supports the rights, dignity and safety of others.

Resources

College members can access further information via the Australian Indigenous Health/InfoNet's Cultural Safety for Health Professionals portal which aims to teach health professionals the concept of cultural safety in healthcare in relation to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet's mission is to contribute to improving the health of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and assist in 'closing the gap' by facilitating the sharing and exchange of relevant, high-quality knowledge.

Links are provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and cultural safety resources via the college website or by going here <https://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/key-resources/health-professionals/cultural-safety-for-health-professionals/>