

Cultural Competence Self-Assessment

Reasons for Self-Assessment

Human service organisations are recognising the need to enhance supports provided to people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds with disability.

Australia has a rich cultural diversity. According to the 2021 Census, 27.6% of Australians were born overseas, and 22.8% spoke a language other than English at home. However, this diversity is not reflected in the rates of service users, including those accessing the NDIS.



Self-Assessment can lead to the development of:

- A service system that is responsive to the needs of people from CALD backgrounds with disability which can deliver equitable outcomes for them regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
 - A strategic organisational plan with clearly defined short-term and long-term goals.
 - Measurable objectives
 - Identified fiscal and personnel resources.
 - Enhanced participation by people from CALD backgrounds with disability and community partnerships.
- Self-assessment can also provide a vehicle to measure outcomes for personnel, organisations, population groups and the community at large. Self-assessment is as an ongoing process, not a one-time occurrence. It offers organisations and their personnel the opportunity to assess individual and collective progress over time.

Key Cultural Competence Questions

1. Is cultural competence embedded in the organisation's philosophy, mission statement, policies, and key objectives?
2. Are culturally and linguistically diverse staff employed throughout the hierarchy of your organisation?
3. Do all staff receive comprehensive cultural competence training on commencing employment?
4. Are resources on cultural competence readily available to employees in the workplace? Do staff know where these are kept and how to access them?
5. Has a cultural self-assessment of your organisation been conducted, and if so, have strategies been implemented in the areas identified as needing further improvement?
6. Do you have a good understanding of the diversity (including ethnicity, culture, languages spoken, sexual orientation, etc) of your local community?
7. Are employees encouraged to be flexible in their approach and seek information on specific cultural behaviours or understandings so that interactions with staff, clients and partner organisations are sensitive to cultural differences?
8. Are staff supported to take more time to work with CALD individuals and families if needed?
9. Does management undertake ongoing cultural competency learning processes in order to best lead and direct staff and policy processes in this area?
10. Does management actively promote the benefits of cultural competence?
11. with the policy obligations?
12. Is there a system of incentives or rewards for initiatives in the workplace which are culturally competent?

Personal Values, Assumptions and Attitudes Checklist

- I have a clear sense of my own ethnic and cultural identity. If not, am I clear where to go to seek further advice and assistance?
- I am aware that in order to learn more about others I need to understand and be prepared to share my own culture.
- I am aware of the assumptions that I hold about people of cultures different from my own.
- I am aware of my stereotypes as they arise and have developed personal strategies for reducing the harm they cause.
- I take opportunity to put myself in situations where I can learn about differences and create relationships.
- I accept that in cross-cultural situations there can be uncertainty and that uncertainty can make me anxious. It can also mean that I do not respond quickly and take the time needed to get more information.
- I am aware of how my cultural perspective influences my judgment about what are "appropriate" behaviours, values, and communication styles.

Resources, Outreach and Promotions Checklist

Does the agency:

- Undertake an analysis of the local area demographics to identify main and emerging CALD communities to identify which communities to engage with?
- Source and distribute to its staff information and resources about cultural diversity and disability issues?
- Display posters, pictures and other materials in the office that reflect the cultural diversity of the communities the agency serves.
- Have available information in languages other than English and in a range of formats (e.g., print, audio, website)?
- Use images that are culturally diverse and culturally appropriate when reprinting information or updating websites?
- Actively promote the availability of qualified interpreters on its promotional materials and outreach activities.
- Display a large interpreter sign in the reception area that can be used by people to indicate their preferred language of choice?
- Actively promote its services to people from CALD backgrounds.
- Consults with ethnic community agencies in the target area.
- Have in place mechanisms for consultations with service users from CALD backgrounds and the ethnic communities in the target areas?
- Have on display general information pamphlets in a variety of languages?
- Use culturally appropriate strategies when engaging with culturally diverse communities?
- Develop links with culturally diverse communities and engage community workers as cultural consultants when needed?



Inside the Agency Checklist

Does the agency:

- Regularly review its mission statement, policies, and procedures to ensure that they incorporate principles and practices that promote cultural diversity and cultural competence.
- Have in place processes which identify cultural, linguistic, or religious needs at the point of intake or initial assessment?
- Have clearly outlined policies and procedures for the engagement of qualified interpreters and translators?
- Have a dedicated interpreter and translating budget line?
- Have an account with a language service provider? e.g., SWITC or TIS National (Translating and Interpreting Services)
- Train all staff in the engagement of face-to-face, video and telephone interpreter services?
- Provide staff regular training opportunities to enhance their cultural competence?
- Have planning processes which include actions to enhance the cultural competence of the agency?
- Establish performance targets to achieve service utilisation rates which reflect the cultural diversity of the community it serves.
- In line with these performance targets, does the agency have a process for prioritising potential service users from a CALD background?
- Have employment practices which encourage people from CALD backgrounds to apply for positions.
- Include 'demonstrated knowledge and experience in cross-cultural issues' as a criterion in job advertisements?
- Encourage people from CALD backgrounds to participate in the agency's governing body?

In my view, our agency:

- Recognises and respects the great degree of diversity among people who experience disability (for example ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, country of origin, socioeconomic status, religion/spirituality, and geographic locale - rural, regional, remote, urban).
- Recognises that perceptions and beliefs about disability are culturally defined.
- Understands that disability is only one aspect of diversity and cultural identity.
- Acknowledges the importance of cultural values, norms, and traditions to the diverse group of people with disabilities and their families.
- Is committed to serving, supporting, and advocating with and on behalf of people who experience disability and their families across all cultural groups.
- Is committed to including people from diverse cultural and linguistic communities in all aspects of our work.
- Is committed to addressing disparities experienced by people from CALD backgrounds with disability, including disparities in health care, education, housing, and employment.
- Believes it is our responsibility to address the bias discrimination, and racism that impacts on people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families.
- Ensures that cultural and linguistic competence is fully integrated into all aspects of our work.
- Has leadership "buy-in" and commitment to cultural and linguistic competence.
- Could benefit from help with addressing cultural and linguistic competence in our vision, mission, and guiding principles.

This factsheet presents information on cultural competence from the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW, the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria Inc and the National Centre for Cultural Competency, Georgetown University (USA) which has been adapted and re-purposed for AMPARO Advocacy Inc.