

# Presentation Notes – Cultural Safety and Competence – What do we need to consider?

## Objectives

So, the objectives of our presentation are:

1. To increase your awareness of cultural safety and competency
2. Discuss the differences between cultural safety and competency
3. To explore common examples in your practice and why this is essential
4. To help you make changes in your practice today
5. How can you change today to be more culturally safe and competent?
6. To give you resources for further learning

Some of you probably already practice being culturally safe and competent, and this presentation is about making you more aware of your abilities and highlighting some areas for improvement.

Please don't feel the need to make notes; I'll send you all the notes from this presentation.

## Increasing awareness

Why is there a need for cultural safety and competency?

Indigenous and minoritized ethnic groups face health inequities, including exposure to health determinants, healthcare access, and quality of care.

These include but are not limited to the following:

Māori have a shorter life expectancy and worse health than any other group in NZ.

Even though they need more healthcare, Māori get less and lower-quality care.

There are significant gaps in communication and understanding between Māori and healthcare providers.

This poor communication leads to a lack of trust and unequal care.

Lastly, healthcare professionals, like everyone else, can have biases based on race, culture, or other factors, which can affect the care they give.

These disparities show the urgent need for healthcare systems and professionals to focus on cultural safety and competency to address these problems.

## Māori experiences in New Zealand health services

This quote from a recent article highlights the impact of lacking cultural elements in rehabilitation services.

It shows the need for more integrated Māori cultural practices to deliver health and rehabilitation services.

This directly affects engagement levels, follow-through, and outcomes.

- Our clinical advisory service considers the information you provide when accessing our services.
- The information is essential for understanding why a particular equipment, housing, or vehicle solution should be considered.
- Information from you as an assessor is the only way our clinical services will know about a person's cultural considerations.
- We appreciate this information to enhance the service we provide

## What's the difference?

Cultural safety means making sure your clients feel respected and understood.

It's more than just knowing about different cultures; it's about how clients feel about your care.

With cultural safety, you're thinking about your culture and the power imbalance between you and your clients.

This approach ensures that your client's cultural identity and well-being are not harmed.

The key parts are:

- **Self-Reflection:** You're thinking about your culture, biases, and assumptions.
- **Power Dynamics:** You recognize and deal with the power differences between you and your clients.
- **Client-centered care:** You ensure your assessments are safe for the client, considering their culture and experiences.

Cultural competency is providing good care to clients from different backgrounds.

It involves getting knowledge, skills, and attitudes to understand, talk to, and work with people from various cultures.

The key parts are:

- **Knowledge:** Knowing about different cultures and their practices.
- **Skills:** Learning to communicate and interact well with people from different cultures.
- **Attitudes:** Being open, curious, and respectful towards other cultures.

The difference would be easier to understand in a table.

We'll look at cultural safety first:

Cultural safety focuses on understanding the client's experience and engaging in self-reflection on power and biases.

This self-reflection is critical to providing client-centered care so that your clients feel respected and empowered.

The approach to cultural safety is not a one-time task but an ongoing process that demands continuous self-reflection, adaptation, and a commitment to addressing power imbalances and biases.

From a client interaction perspective, cultural safety ensures that your care does not harm the client's cultural identity or well-being.

It's about respecting your client's autonomy and allowing them to decide what feels culturally safe.

In comparison, cultural competency focuses on having the proper knowledge, skills, and attitude to interact effectively with clients from different cultures.

Its approach is often seen as static skills and knowledge one can achieve and check off.

From a client interaction perspective, cultural safety emphasizes understanding the client's cultural background.

## Why is cultural safety and competency essential?

Cultural safety and competency are essential because:

It helps you communicate, build trust, and connect with your clients, improving client outcomes.

It helps you to reduce the health gaps and barriers to care experienced by Indigenous and minoritized ethnic groups, which leads to more equitable care.

Practicing cultural competency and safety helps with continuous learning and professional growth.

This builds skills and leads to better and more respectful interactions with clients from different backgrounds.

As healthcare professionals, we are ethically obligated to provide care that respects our clients' cultural backgrounds and needs.

It's also part of practicing standards that we're culturally safe and competent.

Lastly, you create a safe space where your clients feel respected and valued, which helps build strong, trusting relationships.

A 1996 reference was used as subsequently more recent studies referenced back to this paper as a foundation piece of work.

## What can you do?

To be more culturally safe and competent, you can:

Participate in cultural competency and safety training programs and workshops.

Learn about the culture, values, and health beliefs of the people you serve.

To do this, I'll provide you with resources on where to go.

You can reflect on client interactions to recognize and address your biases or assumptions.

I'll provide you with a video resource on implicit bias.

You can use language that is clear, respectful, and free of jargon.

This ensures that your explanations are understandable to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

You can ask clients about their cultural needs and preferences and add these to their care plans.

This will ensure that they are included in decisions about their care so they feel empowered.

## Could you make changes in your practice?

Here are ways to enhance your cultural safety and competence in practice:

Reflect on your biases about a client's cultural background before assessments, consciously ensuring they don't influence your recommendations.

During assessments, it is key to ask open-ended questions about the client's daily routines and how cultural practices might shape your equipment suggestions.

It's essential to involve clients and their families in decision-making about equipment. This ensures that the choices made align with their cultural and practical needs.

Use interpreters to ensure non-English-speaking clients fully understand how to use their equipment.

Attend workshops and training sessions to learn about diverse cultural practices and health beliefs.

Respect clients' requests to place equipment in specific locations that align with their traditional health and well-being beliefs.

This is a quote from a research article examining Maori experiences in healthcare.

This example highlights how a collaborative approach that values and includes the Whanau of the disabled person benefits overall outcomes.

This indicates that dedicating time in our practice to enhancing our cultural safety and competency improves our skills and plays a crucial role in breaking down barriers perpetuating health inequities in New Zealand.

## Resources

Physiotherapy Cultural Standards

<https://physioboard.org.nz/standards/physiotherapy-standards/cultural-competence-standard>

<https://physioboard.org.nz/standards/physiotherapy-standards/he-kawa-whakaruruhau-a-matatau-maori-maori-cultural-safety-and-competence-standard>

Occupational Therapy Cultural Standards and Courses

<https://www.otboard.org.nz/site/practitioner/responsiveness?nav=sidebar>

Pasifika Engagement Training

<https://www.leva.co.nz/training-education/engaging-pasifika/>

Tae Ora Tinana

<https://pnz.org.nz/tae-ora-tinana>

Understanding implicit bias

<https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/resources/resource-library/learning-and-education-modules-on-understanding-bias-in-health-care/>

Ngā Paerewa Te Tiriti eLearning

You'll have to create a new account and look for the training module

<https://learnonline.health.nz/login/index.php>

Contact details

[Tainafi.lefono@enable.co.nz](mailto:Tainafi.lefono@enable.co.nz)

[acc.advisor@enable.co.nz](mailto:acc.advisor@enable.co.nz)

## Key takeaways

So, the key takeaways are:

Indigenous and minoritized ethnic groups face significant health inequities in terms of exposure to health determinants, access to healthcare, and quality of care.

For instance, Māori have a shorter life expectancy and receive lower-quality care despite having more significant healthcare needs.

Addressing these disparities is crucial for achieving health equity.

Cultural safety goes beyond cultural awareness and competency.

It ensures that clients feel respected and understood, focusing on the client's care experience.

This involves healthcare professionals reflecting on their cultural biases and power dynamics to ensure their practices do not harm the client's cultural identity or well-being.

Cultural competency involves acquiring the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to provide adequate care to clients from diverse backgrounds.

This includes understanding different cultures, developing communication skills to interact with clients from other cultures, and fostering an attitude of openness, curiosity, and respect.

Both cultural safety and competency require ongoing self-reflection and adaptation.

Healthcare professionals must continuously evaluate and address their biases and power imbalances to create an environment where clients feel safe and respected.

This ongoing process is essential for providing client-centered care.

Practicing cultural safety and competency helps build trust and better communication with clients, improving health outcomes.

It also contributes to reducing health gaps and barriers to care for Indigenous and minoritized ethnic groups, promoting more equitable healthcare.

Additionally, these practices support continuous professional growth and ethical responsibility, ensuring respectful and effective interactions with clients from diverse backgrounds.

## References

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