

Culture, language and health



Culturally connected healthcare in Tasmania Discussion Guide



Introduction

This guide complements the *Culture, Language and Health* online learning module and web-based resources. It is designed to follow the online learning module.

This guide provides a structure for discussion within a team or group. This can be led by a manager, team leader, educator, or anyone responsible for workforce development or training.

Why have a discussion?

You may ask, or be asked... *why have a group discussion?*

- We know people have a range of knowledge and experience and can collectively learn from each other.
- Holding a facilitated discussion supports healthcare workers apply the content to their specific work areas.
- In sharing, people often feel more connected to others and ideas, and more confident in trying different things.
- Having a discussion can help your specific work team decide on actions to take.

The online learning module and discussion guide provide a unique perspective of consumer experiences of Tasmania's health services having been informed by local people with lived experience.

A positive workplace culture also supports staff wellbeing.



The learning resources support the National Safety and Quality Health Standards (NSQHS), in particular:

Clinical Governance

Standard 1.15

The diversity of consumers and high-risk groups are considered in the planning and delivery of care and services.

Partnering with Consumers

Standard 2.8

The health service organisation uses communication mechanisms that are tailored to the diversity of the consumers who use its services and, where relevant, the diversity of the local community.

Partnering with Consumers

Standard 2.11

Consumers help shape the way the health service organisation operates to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, and these consumers are reflective of the diversity of the people who use its services or, if relevant, the local community.

Partnering with Consumers

Standard 2.14

The health service organisation works in partnership with consumers to incorporate their views and experiences into training and education for the workforce.

About the discussion guide

This guide is part of the Department of Health workforce development resources.

This guide:

- **will support you to have a conversation** on how we deliver health services for all Tasmanians.
- recognises the diverse cultures and languages that are part of Tasmania.
- requires understanding that there are diverse lived experiences of people around us.
- presents cultural humility as a way of working.

Discussion is recommended after people have completed the online module. It is a way for teams or small groups to explore ideas and consider actions. The questions will make more sense to people if they have done the module.

To lead the discussion, you do not need to be an ‘expert’, nor do you need to be from a particular cultural background, or someone for whom English is not their first language. It’s about facilitating a process, not teaching or ‘knowing’ the answers.

How to use the discussion guide

- The *Culture, Language and Health* module includes the voices of community members and people who work in healthcare. Their stories can be used to start a conversation and inform actions.
- You could use topics and ideas from the module as part of a professional learning session, or over a series of team meetings, or within a smaller ‘study group’.
- After deciding what you will do as a group, check everyone has completed the module. Choose a section or action area you want to focus on, for example, working with interpreters, or reflecting on culture, then hold the discussion.

Things to consider

- The module includes examples and ideas about culture and language, including histories of people who come from diverse backgrounds. Sometimes stories or ideas may bring up emotions or a response.
- Remember that a diverse range of people work in and use health services.
- Don't expect someone from a refugee or migrant background to ‘teach’ others. They may have insights and experiences to share and for us to listen to, but there are also other sources you can go to.
- The Tasmanian community is diverse, with different experiences and views.
- Think about where you will hold the discussion. If possible, choose a quieter space where there won't be interruptions.
- Consider how much time you have, allow enough to have a discussion.
- Set up the chairs so people aren't sitting in rows or behind others. This helps with hearing and includes everyone.
- Consider the privacy of the group – do not hold the discussion where others may walk past and overhear.
- When you start, establish 'ground rules' for discussion. For example, we understand we may have different experiences, and we will be respectful and inclusive.
- Check people know what information and supports are available for staff such as Employment Assistance Programs, Equal Opportunity Tasmania, or other services.

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Don't expect someone from a refugee or migrant background to ‘teach’ others.

See the stories and resources on the webpages for experiences and insights.
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Tasks

There are two tasks when having a discussion – facilitating and taking notes.

Decide if you want notes or not. You may decide to just note agreed actions. Also record the session details (when, where, who, topics discussed, actions) as evidence, for example NSQHS Standards. Choose someone to do this.

As facilitator you will lead discussion. You'll need to:

Before

- Remind others to do the online module.
- Review and familiarise yourself with the content.
- Check what your service is currently doing, and how this aligns with strategic priorities such as NSQHS..
- Consider if there are examples or questions that have come up in your work area related to culture and language.

During

- Maintain respect in the discussion. Set the expectations for the group.
- Be an active listener and follow what people are saying.
- Ask clarifying questions if needed.
- Encourage participation.
- Recognise people participate in different ways. Some people need time to think before speaking. Some people do not like to speak in a group.
- Remind people that the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act, 1998 covers everyone and needs to be followed.
- Acknowledge that people from a diverse range of cultural and language backgrounds are both workers and people who access services.

After

- Send an email of thanks to participants, noting any actions that were decided on.
- Remind people of future sessions (if planned).
- Provide copies of, or links to, resources.

Resources

Here are some resources to share with participants beforehand.

- [Culture, language and health | Tasmanian Department of Health](https://www.health.tas.gov.au/professionals/culture-language-and-health) (https://www.health.tas.gov.au/professionals/culture-language-and-health)
- [Equal Opportunity Tasmania: What is discrimination?](https://equalopportunity.tas.gov.au/discrimination/what_is_discrimination/) (https://equalopportunity.tas.gov.au/discrimination/what_is_discrimination)
- [Equal Opportunity Tasmania: Home](https://equalopportunity.tas.gov.au/home) (https://equalopportunity.tas.gov.au/home)
- [Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights | Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care](https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/partnering-consumers/australian-charter-healthcare-rights) (https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/partnering-consumers/australian-charter-healthcare-rights)

As people may have done the module some time ago, they may not recall specific details. Below is an introduction you can use.

Suggested introduction to discussion

Here is an introduction you can use or adapt:

- The discussion is going to explore ideas and actions related to making our healthcare services more respectful of the diverse culture and language backgrounds of Tasmanians.
- Our discussion follows on from the *Culture, Language and Health* online learning module.
- The module includes a quiz about general culture and language topics, profiles of a diverse range of Tasmanians with a migrant background and ways to be culturally connected including tips on communicating well.

.....
Recognise people participate in different ways. Some people need time to think before speaking. Some people do not like to speak in a group.
.....

Questions for discussion

The wording in these questions can be adapted to reflect your work setting. For example, where the word 'service' is used, you might change to ward, unit, team or program.

You can choose which topics to discuss in any order. This can happen during one meeting, or over a number of sessions.



Topic 1

Communication

Communicating effectively is core to inclusive health care.

People cannot find, understand, or use information if it is not provided in a suitable way. This includes both written and verbal communication.

Some tips for improving communication are:

- Using plain language
- Working with interpreters
- Providing information in different formats (video, audio, visual) and languages
- Checking understanding

Questions to discuss:

-  *What do we do in our work area to meet the communication needs of our diverse community?*
-  *What could we do to improve communication?*
-  *How comfortable / familiar are we with working with interpreters?*

Prompters:

- Discuss the process to book, plan, and work with interpreters (see the webpage for more information on working with interpreters)
- Invite people to share communication tips
- Explore health literacy resources which strengthen communication:
- [Health literacy | Tasmanian Department of Health](https://www.health.tas.gov.au/professionals/health-literacy)
(<https://www.health.tas.gov.au/professionals/health-literacy>)
- Consider the policies or processes that provide for inclusive communication



Topic 2

Responding: ways to be inclusive

There are small (but important) things we can do individually, and as teams, to create a respectful, inclusive health system.

Questions to discuss:

-  *How do we know, or find out, how inclusive our service is?*
-  *What are examples of small actions or affirmations we can do to make people feel more valued and included?*



Topic 3

Connecting

The Cultural Humility approach recognises that you cannot know everything about all cultures. It focuses more on being open to learning, connecting with others and considering your own culture.

Questions to discuss:

-  *What other learning or information can we access to better understand the cultural diversity within Tasmania?*
-  *Who is available in our region / area to support people accessing our services? Do we know who we can refer to?*
-  *What training or resources do we need specific to our work area?*

Resource:

- There are specific services and resources available to learn more about the diverse cultures and languages in Tasmania. Some local organisations offer face-to-face training. Look at the services and support listed on the Department of Health webpage.



Topic 4

Respect

This topic focuses on the impact that bias, assumptions and stereotyping can have on a person's experience of health care.

Questions to discuss:

- ? *What behaviours might we notice that tell us someone doesn't feel respected or comfortable? This could be a colleague or someone accessing health services.*
- ? *Workplaces and systems have their own cultures. How do we support and welcome people who are new to our health care system / service?*
- ? *What do we know about the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act, 1998 (the Act)? How does the Act apply to Tasmanians working in, or accessing our service?*

Bias

Bias is a prejudice for or against a person or group compared with others. Usually in a way that's considered to be unfair. Biases may be held by individuals, groups, or institutions and can have negative or positive consequences. There is conscious and unconscious bias.

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that are formed without our awareness. Everyone holds beliefs about various social and identity groups. They come from the tendency to organise social worlds with labels and categories.

Unconscious bias is something for everyone to consider. It is present even in people who are committed to equality. It can be harder to spot than obvious discrimination.

Bias can impact on the care provided. Some examples are assuming all people from a refugee background are not educated, or where people are ignored or made to feel unwelcome.

Conscious bias leads someone to deliberately discriminate against others.



If you or someone you know has been affected by issues covered in this Guide please contact your organisation's Employment Assistance Program for information, advice and support.



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