

Aboriginal Cultural Training – Respecting the Difference

Summary The Aboriginal Cultural Training 'Respecting the Difference' will assist increasing cultural competencies and promote greater understanding of the processes and protocols for delivering health services to Aboriginal people.

Document type Policy Directive

Document number PD2022_028

Publication date 15 July 2022

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Replaces PD2011_069

Review date 15 July 2027

Policy manual Not applicable

File number H22/40582

Status Active

Functional group Personnel/Workforce - Learning and Development

Applies to Ministry of Health, Public Health Units, Local Health Districts, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations, NSW Health Pathology, Public Health System Support Division, Cancer Institute, Government Medical Officers, Community Health Centres, NSW Ambulance Service, Dental Schools and Clinics, Public Hospitals

Distributed to Ministry of Health, Public Health System, Divisions of General Practice, Government Medical Officers, NSW Ambulance Service

Audience All Staff of NSW Health



NSW Health

POLICY DIRECTIVE

Aboriginal Cultural Training – Respecting the Difference

POLICY STATEMENT

All NSW Health staff must build positive and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal people who may be clients, visitors, or staff.

In-line with changing national and state priorities and aligned with the need to ensure appropriate clinically and culturally safe service provision, *Respecting the Difference* has transitioned from a single training event to a continuous cycle of learning to embed culturally safe practice. This further reflects the NSW Health need to respond to the changing nature and needs of Aboriginal individuals, families, and communities over time.

SUMMARY OF POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The *Respecting the Difference* Learning Pathway consists of an eLearning and face-to-face component (My Health Learning (MHL) Pathway Code: 45789185).

All NSW Health staff must complete this mandatory training (including all Medical Officers and Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs)).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members are included in the mandatory training targets, to ensure familiarity with the product design and purpose.

eLearning Module

Respecting the Difference: Know the Difference enables all staff to engage with historical and current information about Aboriginal peoples and their experience of life, government, cross-cultural experiences, trauma, and the impact of history and lived experience in the modern environment.

The module is a key means for NSW Health staff to consider the impacts and influences on Aboriginal peoples' current experiences in society and within the public health system.

Face-to-Face

Respecting the Difference: Be the Difference builds upon the knowledge gained in the eLearning, and engages with action-based learning encouraging staff to:

- Identify and reflect on unconscious bias and the definition of cultural safety,
- Consider scenarios and how to identify and action changes,
- Consider personal and service level opportunities to implement learnings in the day-to-day work environment.

The face-to-face training is able to be delivered via virtual delivery to address situations such as pandemics which limit face-to-face. Due to the practical and relational nature of the learning, agencies should defer to the facilitator for the final decision on the delivery methodology appropriate to the situation.



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POLICY DIRECTIVE

All staff must be supported to complete the training. Chief Executives must ensure that resources are available to cover staff members time away from normal duties. This is in accordance with NSW Health Policy Directive *Leave Matters for the NSW Health Service* ([PD2022_006](#)).

All NSW Health organisations must have local processes in place to monitor and manage local completion rates and to provide appropriate reporting. The NSW Ministry of Health will receive 6 monthly reports on training completions by agency from My Health Learning to specifically inform the Senior Executive.

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Amendment Notes
PD2022_028 July-2022	Deputy Secretary, People Culture & Governance	Address the changes in targets, inclusion of both Senior Medical Officers and Visiting Medical Officers, introduces the cyclical training requirements for all staff and establish the training target of 90% completion rate.
PD2011_069 November-2011	Deputy Director-General Health System Support	Corrects some information in original policy. Replaces PD2011_053.
PD2011_053 August-2011	Deputy Director-General Health System Support	New policy directive



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1. BACKGROUND

Respecting the Difference training is part of the state-wide response to delivering clinically and culturally safe services for Aboriginal people and the organisational response to racism, discrimination, unconscious bias, and other inappropriate behaviours.

The training is essential to supporting every NSW Health staff member to build positive and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal people who may be clients, visitors, or staff.

The *Respecting the Difference* Learning Pathway consists of an eLearning module and face-to-face training (My Health Learning Pathway Code: 45789185).

1.1. About this document

This document provides direction in *Respecting the Difference* training, which is mandatory training for all NSW Health staff, including all Medical Officers and Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members are included in the mandatory training targets, to ensure familiarity with the product design and purpose.

1.2. Key definitions

My Health Learning (MHL)	My Health Learning (MHL) is the NSW Health online learning platform, used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage bookings for learning / training programs • To deliver the online learning components of learning / training programs • As the central records management tool for training reporting.
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2. eLEARNING

Respecting the Difference: Know the Difference (MHL Course Code: 39988681; Duration: 2 hours)

The *Respecting the Difference: Know the Difference* eLearning module is the first part of the learning pathway and must be completed by each individual in My Health Learning.

Initial completion for new staff

New staff must complete within the orientation period (within 4 weeks).

2.1. Learning outcomes

Recognise historical and current factors that influence health outcomes for Aboriginal people and contribute to the significant gap in outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.



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Consider impacts that historical and current experiences of racism, discrimination or trauma can have on Aboriginal peoples' overall wellbeing and broader experiences of health service delivery.

Recognise how an understanding of Aboriginal peoples' perspectives of identity, health and wellbeing contributes to the improvement of service delivery.

Identify practical and culturally sensitive approaches to provide equitable and accessible services for Aboriginal people.

Consider opportunities to engage Aboriginal staff and community in the delivery of culturally safe programs, services, and care for Aboriginal people.

Identify strategies to build rapport and communicate positively with Aboriginal people.

3. FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING

Respecting the Difference: Be the Difference (MHL Course Code: 428003510; Duration: 4 hours)

On completion of the eLearning module, staff members become eligible to undertake the *Respecting the Difference: Be the Difference* face-to-face training. The face-to-face training is undertaken as group work. Access to the training requires pre-enrolment via My Health Learning (MHL).

Initial completion for new staff

New staff must complete within the induction period (within 6 months).

3.1. Learning outcomes

Identify ways you can work more effectively with Aboriginal patients, clients and staff using holistic and trauma informed approaches to service delivery.

Demonstrate and apply an understanding of the Aboriginal perspective of health and wellbeing when working with the local Aboriginal community.

Implement improvements in the service environment that increase cultural safety.

Demonstrate a commitment to equity, cultural sensitivity, and accessibility to health services for Aboriginal people.

Identify and fulfil responsibilities relating to relevant Aboriginal policies and procedures.

Identify local Aboriginal programs, staff, community services and other resources (including Elders) that support health service delivery to Aboriginal people.

Demonstrate ways of building rapport and skills in communicating positively with Aboriginal people.



3.2. Pre-requisite to face-to-face training

The MHL eLearning module, *Respecting the Difference: Know the Difference*, must be completed prior to a staff member participating in the *Respecting the Difference: Be the Difference* face-to-face training.

Facilitators are to confirm that staff who book into the face-to-face training have previously completed the eLearning module.

Staff undertaking the face-to-face training must be in attendance for 95% of the session to be marked as complete in MHL.

3.3. Face-to-face training and secondary employment

In cases where staff members work across multiple agencies, therefore the context of their role and the Aboriginal community which is serviced is different to that of their primary employer, it is recommended that the staff members engage in the secondary employers' face-to-face training even if they have already completed the face-to-face training with their primary employer.

4. CONTINUOUS CYCLE OF LEARNING

To support a continuous cycle of learning and to embed culturally safe practice, all staff are expected to re-complete both the eLearning and the face-to-face training periodically.

Existing staff who have **never completed** the original training must be considered a local priority for completing both the eLearning and face-to-face training.

4.1. Equivalency

There will be no equivalencies granted for either the eLearning module (which must be completed through My Health Learning) or the face-to-face training.

4.2. Extension / Enhancement learning activities

Agencies may consider adding further learning activities to the core eLearning and face-to-face training, as extension programs or enhancement opportunities. This might include community engagement activities, participation in specific local or agency driven events, or participation in cultural programs.

Any such locally added programs will not take the place of the core state-wide online or face-to-face training.

Extension / Enhancement learning activities will need to be managed within and by each agency, its resources and local purposes.

5. SUPPORTING MANDATORY TRAINING COMPLETION

Chief Executives must ensure that all staff are supported to complete or attend training, and that resources are available to cover staff members' time away from normal duties.



This is in accordance with the NSW Health Policy Directive *Leave Matters for the NSW Health Service* ([PD2022_006](#)).

6. REPORTING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The NSW Ministry of Health receives reports from existing data in My Health Learning (MHL) which will support activities including:

- Respecting the Difference data outcomes,
- Local and state-wide outcome and experience evaluations / monitoring,
- The Strategic Aboriginal Health Steering Committee’s annual plans,
- The Centre for Aboriginal Health’s Annual Dashboard,
- The Quality Audit Reporting System (QARS), Aboriginal Cultural Engagement Self-Assessment Audit Tool (ACESAAT), directly contributing to evidence during the accreditation process.

The NSW Ministry of Health will receive 6 monthly reports on training completions by agency from MHL to specifically inform the Senior Executive.

Mandatory training target completion rates

Mandatory training completion target rates to be achieved annually by financial year are 90% for both:

- eLearning module: “*Respecting the Difference: Know the Difference*” and
- Face-to-Face: “*Respecting the Difference: Be the Difference*”.

Managing training achievements

Training targets are to be included in the annual Service Agreements with the Secretary, NSW Health.

Where an organisation has not achieved the target completion rate for the previous financial year, an action plan must be prepared and submitted to the Aboriginal Workforce Unit of the NSW Ministry of Health annually by 31 March.

7. SAFETY AND WELLBEING

All organisations will need to be responsive to the safety and wellbeing of the facilitators and the training participants, as there may be instances in the training which reference trauma, and the ongoing nature of the exposure to trauma, in particular for facilitators.

Responsiveness may include:

- Access to the Employee Assistance Program.
- Trauma-informed and person-centred approaches.

The Facilitator minimum workforce targets (or alternative delivery methodologies) will be included in the annual agency Service Agreements with the Secretary, NSW Health and will be further articulated in the *Good Health – Great Jobs* policy.