

# Cultural Humility In Practice

## Why Cultural Humility?

Being respectful of and responsive to the cultural identities, values, and needs of the individuals and communities we serve helps us to achieve better outcomes, identify needs and ultimately creates stronger and safer communities.

## What Is Cultural Humility?

Cultural humility is about acknowledging that we cannot fully understand everyone's background, that we can use our curiosity to get to know them and we can recognise that people come from many different walks of life. We can become more competent in working with people as a result of this attitude.

We often hear about cultural competence, which is the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact effectively with people from differing backgrounds, cultures or belief systems than our own. The only issue with this is that we never become entirely competent in working with different cultures, because people are so diverse! So, it is good to think about humility because this allows us to be conscious of not 'writing' someone's story without getting to know them properly or missing it altogether based on bias, expectations that we are all the same and so on.

Being humble and curious means:

- Being aware of one's own cultural worldview and biases
- Getting to know about different cultural practices and worldviews
- Developing the skills to communicate and interact across cultures
- Having an attitude of openness, empathy, and respect

## What's The Benefit?

Being able to work with people from varying backgrounds helps us to build trust, improve engagement and ultimately reduces the demand for services (because we get better outcomes more readily). This might mean appreciating someone's class culture, ethnicity or belief system to appreciate how they see the world.

We often get caught into thinking that everyone sees the world in the same way, but they don't. Differing backgrounds means we interact with the world differently. For example, if you meet with someone who has grown up in a culture where women do not speak about private and domestic matters how can you know if they might need help? Being able to be aware of this possibility and open opportunities for them to share could save their lives or further suffering.

## **Cultural Humility Practice Principles**

- Know your community
- Be curious about and respect identity and preferences
- Adapt communication
- Challenge discrimination
- Build trusting relationships
- Prioritise people over process
- Reflect and learn

## **Recommended Learning & Research**

- Research local demographics
- Unconscious Bias and Reflective Practice Training
- Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Training
- Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Workshops
- Trauma-Informed Practice
- Inclusive Language and Communication Skills
- LGBTQ+ Inclusion Training
- Faith and Belief Literacy
- Intersectionality and Identity Training
- Community Engagement and Co-Production

## **Leadership and Organisational Support**

- Model inclusive behaviours
- Provide training and resources
- Create safe spaces for dialogue and feedback
- Embed cultural competence into policies and supervision