Inclusive Service Standards

Acknowledgement

Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing acknowledges and pays respect to the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, on whose land this resource was developed.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their ancestors and elders, both past and present and acknowledge their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We hope our work contributes to the wider project of respect and recognition between cultures in Australia.

The Inclusive Service Standards were developed with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health, Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) initiative.

Attribution

Copyright

ISBN

Authors

Ljubica Petrov
Tonina Gucciardo-Masci
Dale Park

Contact us

Enquiries about the licence and any other use of the document can be sent to Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing: info@culturaldiversity.com.au

Inclusive Service Standards

An inclusive approach focuses on adapting and improving current services and organisational practices so they are welcoming, safe and accessible for all.

Contents

Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing

The Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing provides expertise in inclusive service provision to the Australian aged care sector with the aim of improving outcomes for older people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Companion resources

The Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing has developed a suite of resources to assist in the implementation of the Inclusive Service Standards. They include a video, discussion guide and organisational audit and planning tools. Visit www.culturaldiversity.com.au to access these and other useful resources.

What are the Inclusive Service Standards

The Inclusive Service Standards provide a new framework that support organisations on their journey to becoming truly inclusive for all consumers. They comprise three standards that guide organisations through articulating their commitment to inclusive services, developing systems that support inclusive services and ensuring that there is capacity to deliver inclusive services.

The Inclusive Service Standards are designed to embed a systematic and holistic approach across an organisation that recognises and responds to the breadth of consumer diversity.

Why services need to consider how they address diversity

Australia is shaped by its evolving diversity. As our society continues to transform, it is important for service providers do the same. This requires us to move beyond siloed understandings of diversity and implement an approach that acknowledges our obligation and commitment to work with all consumers in an inclusive way.

Everyone's beliefs, traditions, values, relationships, identities, and histories are unique. Organisations that are not flexible and responsive to these characteristics create barriers for consumers.

Barriers to access, quality outcomes and full participation occur when the policies, practices or procedures of an organisation intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against particular sections of the population or consumer group.

Addressing diversity ensures that:

- systemic access barriers are removed;
- consumers are active participants in their service provision; and
- equitable outcomes are achieved.

Understanding diversity

Diversity encompasses any characteristic used to differentiate one person from another. The spectrum of human diversity permeates the way in which individuals and communities experience the world, the way they self-identify and the way they are identified by others.

People may experience and identify with multiple diversity characteristics at any given time or in any given context.

It is encumbant on service providers to understand an individual's diversity characteristics and how these can intersect and be experienced differently for each individual. It is also important for service providers to understand how these characteristics can lead to a person experiencing multiple disadvantages or barriers to accessing services.

An inclusive approach to addressing diversity

Inclusive service provision moves beyond viewing a consumer as a series of needs, stereotypes or one-dimensional diversity characteristics. It places all consumers at the centre, engaging them in their service provision, listening and responding to what is important to them.

The key principles of an inclusive approach include:

- commitment to understanding and addressing diversity in the broadest sense;
- holistic practice that supports the intersecting diversity characteristics of all consumers;
- informed knowledge of local community;
- sophisticated methods of identifying and removing systemic barriers;
- flexible, responsive and adaptable style when working with consumers; and
- robust systems that embed consistent practice through the organisation.

Addressing diversity through an inclusive approach may be new for many organisations. An inclusive approach focuses on adapting and improving current services and organisational practices so they are welcoming, safe and inclusive for all consumers no matter what their diversity characteristics may be.

The purpose of the Inclusive Service Standards

The Inclusive Service Standards provide a structure through which services can embed inclusive practices across all policies, strategies and service provision.

Organisations that successfully implement the Inclusive Service Standards will:

- articulate their responsibility to address diversity in a holistic and systematic way;
- understand the diverse interest, goals and needs of consumers and respond supportively;
- empower consumers to make informed decisions about their service provision; and
- deliver flexible, accessible services free of barriers and discrimination.

Adopting the standards not only ensures better outcomes for individual consumers, it also assists organisations meet the requisite service responsibilites set out by government.

Service responsibilities

The Australian Aged Care Quality Agency Single Aged Care Quality Framework (2018) requires *'all services to deliver care that is non-discriminatory and inclusive'* and which is *'reflective of, and responsive to, an individual's culture, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality, religion and spirituality'.* (Standard 1 - Consumer dignity and choice).

The Single Aged Care Quality Framework is supported by Australia's Aged Care Diversity Framework (2017) which reinforces the need for aged care providers to embed an inclusive approach in the design and delivery of services for older people from diverse backgrounds.

Both these government frameworks are founded upon the provisions set out for aged care providers in the Aged Care Act 1997.

The Act requires all aged care service providers to *'facilitate access to aged care services by those who need them, regardless of race, culture, language, gender, economic circumstance or geographic location'* (the Act 201 [e]) and to *'encourage diverse, flexible and responsive aged care services that are appropriate to meet the needs of the recipients of those services and the cares of those recipients; and facilitate the independence of, and choice available to, those recipients and carers'* (the Act 2-1 [g]).

The Aged Care Act identifies nine special needs groups which aged care providers need to consider in the development and delivery of their services:

- people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- people who live in rural or remote areas;
- people who are financially or socially disadvantaged;
- veterans;
- people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless;
- care leavers;
- parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal; and
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

The Inclusive Service Standards support organisations on their journey to becoming inclusive for all consumers. In doing so they support the successful implementation of consumer directed care and ensure that they execute their legal and funding responsibilites.

Standard 1 - Commitment to inclusive services

The organisation clearly articulates its commitment to building an environment which responds to consumers' diversity and embeds inclusive service provision across all of its systems.

Criteria

1.1
Responsibility

The organisation is committed to its responsibility to develop and deliver services that ensure equitable access and quality outcomes for all consumers.

1.2
Strategy

A commitment to inclusive service provision is embedded within the organisation's strategic plan.

1.3
Policy and Procedure

An inclusive approach to service provision is embedded into the development and implementation of the organisation's policies and procedures.

1.4
Quality and Continuous Improvement

The organisation's quality and continuous improvement initiatives include the monitoring of diversity and inclusion strategies.

Performance measures

- Key organisational documents such as commitment statements, strategic plans and policies demonstrate a commitment to inclusive service provision.

- The organisation's commitment to inclusive service provision is promoted to all key stakeholders.

- Quality and continuous improvement processes include the monitoring of inclusive service strategies.

- The organisation identifies key roles and responsibilities which drive and promote culturally inclusive service provision.

- Service provision procedures reflect an inclusive service approach.

- The organisation's printed and online collateral is reflective of a commitment to delivering services in an inclusive way.

Standard 2 - Developing systems that support inclusive services

The organisation designs and implements services based on evidence derived from organisational reviews and consultation with stakeholders.

Criteria

2.1
Analysis

The organisation analyses its strengths, gaps, capabilities and readiness to implement and maintain an inclusive approach to service delivery.

2.2
Stakeholder Engagement

The organisation has an inclusive stakeholder consultation process that informs planning and delivery of services.

2.3
Removing Barriers

The organisation identifies and responds to potential or real barriers and/or discriminatory practices faced by individual consumers.

2.4
Feedback

The organisation has a robust system for receiving feedback from a diverse range of consumers and uses feedback to improve services.

Performance measures

- The organisation undertakes an analysis of strengths, gaps, capabilities and readiness to implement and maintain an inclusive approach to service delivery.

- Stakeholder consultation processes include and facilitate consultation with special needs groups.

- The organisation has mechanisms for identifying and removing barriers that consumers from special needs groups may experience in accessing services (e.g. language barriers, lack of information, physical barriers and affordability).

- A system is in place for receiving feedback from consumers from special needs groups and for using this feedback to improve services.

- The organisation's communication strategies include specific actions to target special needs groups.

Standard 3 - Capacity building for inclusive services

The organisation's management and staff are equipped with knowledge, skills and resources required to plan and deliver inclusive services.

Criteria

3.1
Contemporary Knowledge

Management and staff are engaged with and use up-to-date diversity research, information, tools and resources to effectively respond to diversity.

3.2
Performance and Skills

All staff have skills to fulfil their responsibilities to implement inclusive practices.

3.3
Training

Induction, training and on-going development reflects the organisational commitment to inclusive services.

3.4
Resources

The organisation invests in personnel, information and resources that support the development and implementation of inclusive service provision.

Performance measures

- The organisation identifies key skills required for management and staff to be able to fulfil their responsibilities in implementing inclusive service provision.

- Management and staff have access to up-to-date training, information, tools and resources to effectively respond to the diverse needs of consumers from special needs groups.

- Management and staff key performance indicators include meeting inclusive service standards.

- Induction and ongoing professional development reflects the organisational commitment to inclusive services.

- The organisation allocates budget items that support the development and implementation of inclusive service provision (e.g. interpreter services, translations, inclusive service training and targeted media campaigns).