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POLICING FOR A SAFER AUSTRALIA

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Cultural Awareness



If we are going to engage effectively with people and communities, it is important to understand how individuals and groups are feeling.

Learning Outcomes

- Explain cultural awareness
- Identify the elements of cross-cultural communication
- Examine specific cultural considerations
- Apply religious sensitivity

Disclaimer

- Cultural and Religious awareness training DOES NOT provide definitive rules for every situation
- However, it is important to be aware of some cultural practices

Participants should consider undertaking AFP specific training. At the moment;

Islamic awareness training

Our Aim:

- ✓ To better serve the community
- ✓ To enhance public trust, confidence and safety

[Antiracism and cultural diversity principles \(ANZPAA\)](#)

Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency

Source: Antiracism and cultural diversity (8) principles (ANZPAA)

<http://www.anzpaa.org.au/publications/general/anti-racism-principles/anti-racism-principles>

Including Principles (printout provided)

02 respect, value and support the cultural diversity of Australian and New Zealand society.

05 ensure police communicate with the community, including the media, in a manner that does not perpetuate hostility, prejudice or bias.

07 provide police with the awareness, skills and knowledge to enable them to identify and address how their own biases, both learned and unconscious, impact decision-making and behaviour.

08 ensure police training continually promotes anti-racism and cultural capability.

What is culture

- *Means* "the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one generation to the next" (Macquarie Dictionary)
- It is also defined as a group's shared system of beliefs, values and rules of conduct. Culture is an abstract concept. Culture is constantly changing and includes diverse sub-cultures.

(2010 Australian Multicultural Foundation)

Culture

- Operates at several levels:
 - National Cultures
 - Regional Cultures
 - Occupational Cultures
 - Organisational Cultures
 - Team and Group Cultures
 - Personal Levels
 - Upbringing
 - Personality type
 - ideology

Culture can operate at several levels:

Instructor to provide examples or seek examples from participants. Instructor can also distinguish between the different levels of culture.

EG National v Regional – can differ based on immigration, history, isolation, religion, dialect, slang etc

General Cultural Diversity

- People see, interpret and evaluate things in different ways
- What is considered appropriate behaviour in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another
- As a result, misunderstandings arise and relationships are ineffective
- Misinterpretations occur because we lack awareness of our own behavioural rules and project them onto others
- It's difficult, because our culture is not conscious to us. We are unaware of our own cultural traits.
- Remember, we are dealing with unique individuals, not 'cultures'

Stephanie Quappe and Giovanna Cantatore

Why do we need cultural diversity training?

Group Discussion 5min

Instructor to lead brief discussion by asking the group to provide examples that they have experienced or are aware of for the following points.

- What is considered appropriate behaviour in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another
- Misunderstandings and relationships are ineffective
- Misinterpretations

Cross-cultural Communication

4 basic elements:

1. **Verbal** behaviour
2. **Non-verbal** behaviour
3. Communication **style**
4. **Values**, attitudes and prejudices

2010 Australian Multicultural Foundation

4 basic elements of cross-cultural communication:

1. Verbal behaviour: What we say and how we say it.

This includes accents, tone of voice, volume, rate of speech and slang.

2. Non-verbal behaviour: What we say when we're not talking.

This includes 'body language' such as eye contact and ways of showing respect, 'object language' such as dress codes and ornaments and 'environmental language' such as house and office design.

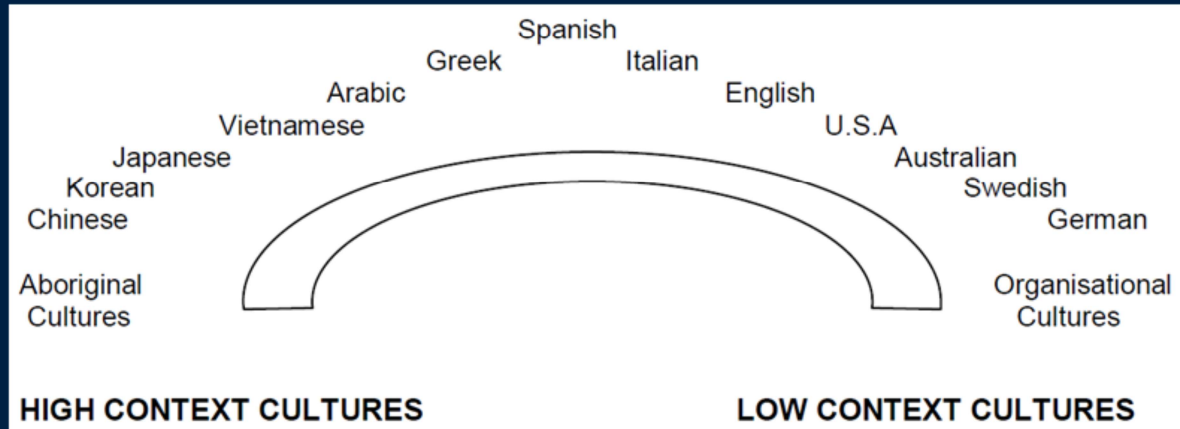
3. Communication style: How we prefer to express ourselves.

This includes ways of getting our point across, assumptions about ways of speaking and interacting with each other.

4. Values, attitudes and prejudices: What we believe is right.

This element is the most complex and includes our deep beliefs and feelings about our own identity, about the world and how we judge other people.

Values, Attitudes & Prejudices



Cultural Diversity Arc

In a "High Context Culture", the members share and require a deep, complex body of "understood" values and experiences. Many aspects of living are assumed. These cultures tend to be the older, more traditional societies such as China, Japan, Africa and the Middle East. The highest context cultures are the oldest, the oldest being indigenous cultures such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

In a "Low Context Culture" members have and require less shared knowledge to cooperate. They rely more on defined roles and written codes than assumptions. These cultures tend to be younger societies such as Western Europe, Canada, USA and Australia. The lowest context cultures are the youngest, including those of organisations such as corporations and departments.

Communication fears

When communicating with strangers, both at home and abroad, most of us worry about:

- Making a fool of ourselves
- Being ridiculed or embarrassed
- Embarrassing someone (a guest or business associate)
- Offending someone or being offended
- Giving or getting the wrong information
- Making or forming a bad impression
- Becoming or appearing confused

The stress of dealing with these fears on a regular basis can create great discomfort which is sometimes referred to as 'Culture Shock'. The intensity of this experience depends on a number of factors.

Perhaps a brief discussion of some examples from the class – personal experiences with cultural misunderstandings



Culture Shock



Meaning: The psychological disorientation most people experience when they have extended contact with a different culture to their own

■ **Symptoms:**

- Anxiety
- Fatigue of constantly adapting
- Negative emotions such as loss, rejection (of and by the host culture)
- Discomfort
- Incompetence
- Confusion of values and identity



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What is 'Culture Shock'?

The reason this disorientation can have such a profound effect on people is that many of the cultural differences we experience threaten, or appear to threaten, our sense of meaning in life. More responsibility Different laws

CHALLENGES TO ENGAGEMENT

Multicultural communities and people from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds may face a number of challenges that can affect their engagement, such as:

- learning and adjusting to a new political system;
- difficulties in navigating government structures and understanding government processes, roles and responsibilities;
- adjusting to a different culture and language;
- coping with the emotions associated with leaving friends and family behind;
- exposure to racism;
- securing affordable and appropriate housing;
- gaining ongoing employment; and
- access to General Practitioners and other health services.

Cross-cultural communication

- Admit that you don't know
- Suspend judgement
- Empathy
- Systematically check your assumptions
- Become comfortable with ambiguity

How can you be more culturally diverse?

Admit that you don't know. Knowing that we don't know everything, that a situation does not make sense, that our assumptions may be wrong is part of the process of becoming culturally aware. Assume differences, not similarities.

Suspend judgments. Collect as much information as possible so you can describe the situation accurately before evaluating it.

Empathy. In order to understand another person, we need to try standing in his/her shoes. Through empathy we learn of how other people would like to be treated by us.

Systematically check your assumptions. Ask your colleagues for feedback and constantly check your assumptions to make sure that you clearly understand the situation.

Become comfortable with ambiguity. The more complicated and uncertain life is, the more we tend to seek control. Assume that other people are as resourceful as we are and that their way will add to what we know.

Stephanie Quappe and Giovanna Cantatore What is Cultural Awareness, anyway? How do I build it?

Cross-cultural communication cont...

- Ask them if it is their first interaction with Police
- Employ the use of an interpreter if English is their second language
- In their culture, friends may be considered to be part of the family and may be part of their decision making process
- Ask them how they would like to be addressed
- Tell them why you think they are here, but ask them why they think they are here
- Ask them what their goal is. Reinforce that they are part of the decision making process
- Who else in their life needs to be involved in making decisions
- Explain to them the process, including the use of video recordings and photographs and obtain their consent
- Ask questions to ensure that their interpretation (understanding) of what you are saying is what you mean
- Use non-verbal communication. Nod your head that you understand so they know you are listening

Group Activity

Vietnam

- What do we know about the country of origin?
- Where do we obtain this information?



15min Group Activity: Facilitator led group discussion to consider the two questions in the slide.

1. How do we obtain information relevant to our Interviewee?

- From their Embassy?
- Open source on the internet?
- The interpreter? Etc.

2. Each process has benefits and potential negatives.

What if your interviewee is seeking political asylum?

- How dangerous would it be to speak to their Embassy?
- What if your investigation may leave the suspect/witness vulnerable from State awareness and potential intimidation or persecution.

3. From open source you are likely to only obtain information that the source sponsor wants you to believe. For example, have you ever researched a holiday destination on an official tourist board web site. What does it promote? I would suggest that its is not going to include any negative aspects and certainly not low socio-economic issues and deprivation.

Be wary of Interpreter personal bias towards the interviewee.

*The two questions on the slide are designed to ask the student to really think of what they actually know of the country which in turn will assist them understanding the background of the individual across the table to them. Time **must** be invested in this process of research.*

Immigrants and Refugees:

Is the change by Choice or by Chance?

Immigrant

- Time to prepare
 - financially
 - physically
 - socially
 - Psychologically

Refugee

- Change is forced on them by external circumstances
- Unplanned
- No preparation

Face new challenges and threats to their sense of meaning in life

Challenges & threats:

- Different climate
- Different housing
- Separation and Homesickness
- No friends or New friends
- Different humour
- New foods and New ways of eating
- Language or Slang and idioms
- Money worries or Unfamiliar jobs
- Prejudice
- Shyness
- New body language
- Different values and New freedoms
- Unspoken do's & don'ts

Refugees

- MEANS: *'Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'*

Refugee Cultural Understanding

In general, issues facing refugees and humanitarian entrants include:

- Fear and distrust of authority
- Large families and complex family relationships
- Little or no English proficiency
- Limited education
- History of torture and traumatic experiences
- Lack of familiarity with Australian culture
- Typical experiences include: rape or sexual abuse, physical abuse, separation from their family, witnessing the torture of family members, being denied schooling and education
- The vast majority of adverse experiences have been at the hands of 'authority'



Refugees

- Understand that the individuals you will be dealing with may not be in Australia by choice
- Understand that despite not even knowing you, they may hate you
- Take the time to carefully explain what you are doing and why.
- Remember they have come from a third world country and will undoubtedly have suffered considerably
- With time, many different communities have settled peacefully into Australia.
- Always be professional with all interactions



Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders

- History has led to mistrust
- Local training or advice may be required about specific cultural awareness
- Put a high priority on family (including extended), community and cultural obligations
- Don't talk too fast
- Don't mimic their ways of speaking
- Don't be too direct as this can be confrontational or rude
- Some will avoid eye contact
- Don't ask hypotheticals
- Ask for advice
- Building relationship is just as important as outcomes
- Explain technical language and jargon
- Don't assume anything
- Demonstrate respect



<http://shareourpride.reconciliation.org.au>

Many Indigenous people in Australia have a unique view of the world that's distinct from the mainstream. Land, family, law, ceremony and language are five key interconnected elements of Indigenous culture. For example, families are connected to the land through the kinship system, and this connection to land comes with specific roles and responsibilities which are enshrined in the law and observed through ceremony. In this way, the five elements combine to create a way of seeing and being in the world that's distinctly Indigenous.

Be ready for cultural differences in communication, particularly in areas where traditional culture has been less disrupted. A few examples are given below, but you should talk to local people about others to be aware of.

- Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people prefer not to hold a gaze. Their protocols of eye contact may be different.
- Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people prefer a softer hand-shake.
- A few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may need assistance in filling out forms if they did not receive many years of education.
- Some men will prefer to speak with men, and women with women, so you should be ready to accommodate that preference (as you should with all customers).
- In some rural and remote communities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will communicate differently in public. For example, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people shout at each other in public places. Sometimes this can feel threatening. However, you should not be distressed by it. To some extent it is just a different style of communication. Arguments are more easily had out in the open, rather than behind closed doors (of course, if it escalates to physical violence it is cause for concern, and can require police intervention).

Occasionally you will have difficult interactions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Here are just a few pointers on how to manage this well.

- Most importantly – try not to take any hostility personally. One of the impacts of history has been that it has built up a legacy of hostility and mistrust between us. Some tend to assume that people will try to exploit them, or treat them disrespectfully, and many experience significant discrimination. This assumption can lead to negative communication on their part which then leads others to be defensive or hostile back to them, which further builds their hostility and mistrust. A vicious cycle of mistrust builds up.
- But you can break this cycle. Simply commit, within yourself, to interacting with the person respectfully and personally. If you are genuine in this, she or he may quickly come to see you are a helpful person, and will communicate more easily.
- Here is a simple 'checklist' to ensure that you are communicating well in difficult circumstances;

- Have I really understood what this person needs?
- Am I using language that s/he understands?
- Am I being as respectful as I can (this can be hard when you are not being treated with respect, but it's the quickest way past the difficult interaction)?
- Am I going out of my way to demonstrate how keen I am to help her or him?

Diplomat considerations

- A foreign national attached to an embassy in the capacity of a diplomat or family member is not subject to the Australian judicial process
- Contact Protection Liaison immediately
 - They will advise on the status of the person and give advice

Religious Sensitivity

- Buddhist faith
- Christian faith
- Hindu faith
- Islamic faith
- Jewish faith
- Sikh faith

Considerations for;

- Protocols for strangers
- Places of worship
- The home
- Sacred objects
- Special clothing, jewellery or ornaments
- Death, bereavement and mourning

[ANZPAA Pocket Guide for Police](#)

In addition to cultural diversity, religion can have a defining influence on a persons behaviour, communication, values, beliefs and attitudes.

The 6 main religions are listed, but there are many others.

Remember, each religion is unique, additionally alternative versions/denominations/sects of the same religion can differ.

Religious Sensitivity

Facilitator to make participants aware of ANZPAA Pocket Guide and Foldout for Operational Police using hyperlink – available on Moodle

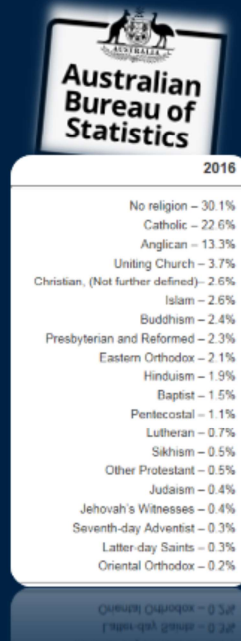
Religions

■ Buddhist

- Meditation morning and evening
- Touching on the head is offensive
- Direct eye contact means confrontation
- Philosophy – avoid harmful actions
- Vegetarian
- 2.4% of Australia

■ Christian

- Prayer
- Some wear head coverings
- Church is Saturday or Sunday
- 9 major denominations
- Holy book: Bible
- 52% of Australia



■ Hindu

- Pray dawn and dusk after cleansing
- Women wear glass wedding bangles and necklace – breaking or removing is an extremely bad omen
- Wear thread diagonally across body – should never be removed
- Avoid physical contact with strangers
- Principles – non violence, reincarnation and tolerance of difference
- Do not eat beef and many are vegetarian
- 1.9% of Australia

See media release printout by the ABS on 18/01/2018 re Census data

▪ Sikh Faith

- Must worship sunrise, sunset and before bed
- Male must wear a turban
- Others must not touch a turban without permission
- Baptised Sikh always wears;
 - Small sword in shoulder belt
 - Iron bangle
 - Special underwear
 - Small wooden comb
- Will not remove any items
- Only family can touch women
- Photographing a woman is serious
- 0.5% of Australia

▪ Islamic Faith

- Ramadan fasting dawn to dusk
- Pray 5 times per day in a clean space
- Attend Friday prayers
- Where possible, same gender conversations
- In front of males, women can remove face covering but not veil
- Holy book: Koran

▪ Australian Muslims

- Diverse – 120 countries
- 36% born in Australia
- 2.6% of Australia

ABS 2016

▪ **Jewish**

- Pray up to 3 times per day
- Some wear a kippah (also known as a skullcap)
- Limit contact to immediate family
- Sabbath is Saturday – work is prohibited
- Holy book: Torah
- 0.4% of Australia

▪ **Christian**

- Prayer
- Some wear head coverings
- Church is Saturday or Sunday
- 9 major denominations
- Holy book: Bible
- 52% of Australia

Remember...

With cultural issues taken into consideration, treat the individual as you would anyone else.

However, you will most likely find it very valuable to fully explain the process of your interaction and be aware of your language.

Explain the situation in fine detail until the person understands what is going on.

Planning

- Develop a well-planned communication strategy
- Research
- Talk to people
- Identify key people in the community
- Identify cultural protocols, practices and spiritual beliefs
- Create partnerships with organisations you regularly work alongside
- Be patient

Planning

- Interpreter
- Venue
- Catering
- Transport
- childcare

Talk to people

- The witness/suspect
- Support groups
- Community engagement groups
- Community service groups
- AFP Liaison Officers

AFP & Police Resources

- FILO
 - Manages AFP relationships with Australian citizens and/or their family who are a VICTIM of a crime or a disaster and the AFP is involved
 - Victim based crime, CT, Onshore, Offshore
 - Gathers evidentiary material, information and intelligence in a sensitive manner
 - When AFP investigative action results in a VICTIMs displacement from home, likely due to a forensic search
 - FILO register of previous deployments, exposure, skills including language
- Victim Liaison Officers
- CT Contact Officers Network
 - Families of SUSPECTS and/or OFFENDERS within CT investigations
 - Displacement due to forensic search
 - POI has been arrested for domestic CT matter
 - POI has died or been injured due to CT incident
 - POI has travelled overseas to join/support foreign conflict
- Community Liaison Officers
- Aboriginal Liaison Officers – Malunggang Indigenous Officers Network (MION)
- Multicultural Liaison Officer (ACT)
- Intermediary Services (Pilot programs)

CT Contact Officers Network –

Resources

- Open source
 - www.everyculture.com
 - www.homeaffairs.gov.au – multicultural affairs
 - www.culturaldiversity.com.au – Centre for cultural diversity in ageing
 - www.australianstogether.org.au – ATSI terminology guide
 - <http://www.anzpaa.org.au/publications/general/religious-spiritual-diversity-for-police>
- Telephone interpreting service (TIS) 24/7
 - Must be contacted prior to conducting interview
 - Can't speak English
 - Has a physical disability that renders them incapable of communicating in English

Religious considerations in planning

- Requirement for prayer times
- Interaction between the genders
 - Conversation
 - Physical contact
 - Eye contact
 - Body and face coverings
- Requirements when entering a place of worship or home
 - Shoes
 - Head covering
 - Gender

If unsure always conduct your research in the planning phase of your interview

Self Reflection

- Be aware of the witness' own preferences and that our own cultural influences will affect how we perceive people.
- Be aware we may judge other people's behaviour and beliefs according to the standards of our own culture, and we need to reflect on our practice to begin to understand the person.
- Be aware of making assumptions about cultural influences and applying generalisations to individuals.
- Understand that the behaviour and beliefs of people within each culture can vary considerably. Respect the variance and don't stereotype.
- Understand that not all people identify with their cultural or religious background.
- Increase your knowledge about different cultural practices and issues through cultural awareness training or cultural background information.
- Understand the importance of appropriate communication and adjust your communication accordingly.
- Don't treat someone as psychologically abnormal. Always explore cultural explanations.

Remember...

- A key to working effectively across cultures is to be able to build bridges of understanding between people.
- The challenge and difficulty arises because cultures are largely hidden from view. Like an iceberg, only 10% of a culture is visible, through the words and actions of its people.
- The best way to build a bridge is through communication



Questions?

Learning Outcomes

- Explain cultural awareness
- Identify the elements of cross-cultural communication
- Examine specific cultural considerations
- Apply religious sensitivity



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