Cultural Safety Framework Summary

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An Extract - Cultural Safety Framework

This summary is an extract from a Cultural Safety Framework codesigned with members of the many diverse communities that live, work or spend their time in the Salisbury area, Kaurna Country.
The Cultural Safety Framework has been developed to support businesses, community and government organisations to become safer spaces for people from diverse backgrounds to thrive in. We hope this document will inspire you to facilitate changes in your own environments to improve cultural safety.

To access the full Framework and understand how the information was developed, please visit our website.

Creating a Culturally Safe Environment

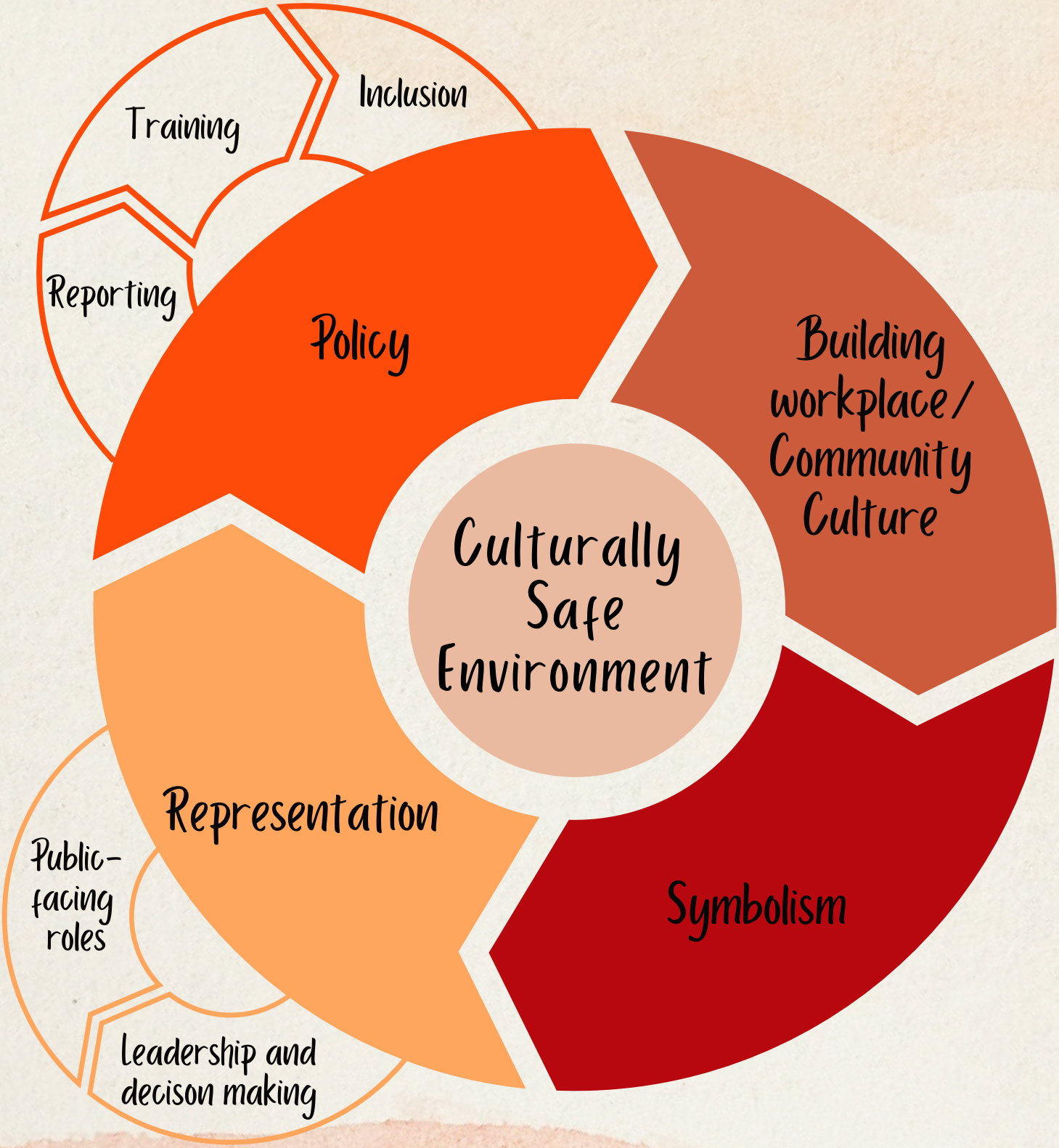
A culturally safe environment is a flexible and continuously evolving place where people of diverse cultures and communities feel comfortable to live, work and simply be without significant compromise to their wellbeing or to their heritage, culture and faith. A culturally safe environment:

- is built in collaboration with communities
- responds to changing needs and is open to criticism and discussion
- places the responsibility of safety in the collective and in leadership rather than individuals who may feel unsafe
- challenges cultural norms in the wider society

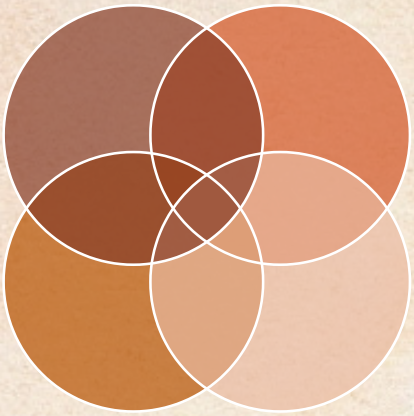
Throughout the consultation and co-design, process community members mapped out and described culturally safe and unsafe spaces. The following key elements depict broadly what community members felt would underpin culturally safe environments:

CORE CONCEPTS	MEANING
Representation	Representation of diversity amongst the leadership team Representation of diversity in outward-facing roles such as reception, front of house Representation of communities that surround or utilise services
Symbolism	Signs of acknowledgment of First Nations people Signs of acknowledgement of diversity in Australia e.g. languages, flags Signs of appreciation, representation, organisation's stance on racism and inclusivity
Policy	Policies for dealing with racism in the workplace / organisation / community Adequate reporting systems that are accessible and well known / on display Consistent reviewing of policies to reflect the needs of current communities / staff
Workplace / community culture	Calling out and discussing racism is normalised People of diverse backgrounds have avenues to influence change Staff and community are consistently checking their unconscious bias

Creating a Culturally Safe Environment



Core Concepts of the Framework



Representation

Visual representation: Representation is a big driver of cultural safety. People need to see themselves or their values represented in the world around them to feel like they belong or are welcome. It is also important for wider society to see people from cultures that are different to theirs' represented in order to believe that those people belong. Many issues of feeling isolated or judged in a place can be changed by having culturally sensitive people of diverse backgrounds in customer service and other front-office roles. In the same way, how we see people treated also affects our worldview. If people see people of diverse backgrounds being treated well, then that is an indication that they will also be treated well. On the other hand, if they see racism, then they may believe that they will also experience racism.

Beyond the optics: Lack of representation of the community at decision-making levels can see instances of racism go unchecked and perpetuated. Inclusion at every level makes an organisation's stance clear. Some questions to ask are:

- What does the community look like, and who is in it?
- What do the people in the community care about and how do I know this?
- Who is not in the room? Why are they not in the room?

Symbolism

Symbolism is perhaps the simplest step to make when it comes to creating a safe environment. Placing a First Nations flag, a sign that says "As-salamu Alaikum" or "welcome" written in a variety of languages are the most common examples that can be seen in organisations across the state. There are also non-visual forms that can be powerful symbols of safety e.g. acknowledging the traditions and experiences of people in your workplace and community. However, there are two crucial things to consider when choosing to display symbolism:

Consultation: Consultation with your community to understand what is useful and relevant in your locality is necessary otherwise it can deflect from your intention. You may have an Acknowledgement of Country in the wrong language, you may misspell words or misrepresent cultures. While communities may have sympathy for your intentions, without consultation, this can become a sign that you wish to appear inclusive but do not engage with the communities you claim to be inclusive of.

Reflection: Symbolism should be reflective of the way your community, organisation or workplace operate and interact with the community.

- You may have the First Nations flag and do an Acknowledgement of the Country but does this follow through with respectful behaviours, actions and systems?
- Do you accommodate for cultural and linguistic differences that may exist amongst staff or the community?

Policy

While there may be symbolism, there may be representation, if the policy does not support cultural safety then many other efforts become tokenistic. The policy reinforces values from the top down. Three key issues that came up regularly in our community consultations were:

Inclusion: Policies that engrain consultation in the process of decision-making will support ongoing change and evolution. It is also important to ensure there are spaces for people to speak about their grievances and to find support. This might take the form of a social inclusion committee that regularly reviews policies and ensures they are relevant. Hiring and consulting with people from First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, ongoing review of cultural safety practices and the ability to challenge decisions and systems in place without negative repercussions are some components of good policies.

Training: Cultural competency is a process rather than an endpoint. Where possible, organisations and businesses must utilise ongoing training and learning opportunities available to them. This ensures the staff and community develop an understanding of how cultural competence may impact attitudes towards cultural understanding, differences and practices.

Reporting: Transparent systems for reporting incidences and experiences that make people feel unsafe are crucial for ensuring cultural safety. Good reporting systems are clearly communicated, easy to use, and widely known and understood by potential users of the space. They should ideally be approved in consultation with those who experience racism. Ultimately, the reporting system must remove the onus and guilt from the victim, provide options to report anonymously, ensure no repercussions for reporting an incident and have no confrontation between reporter and perpetrator.

Building a workplace / community culture

Representation, Symbolism, and Policy come together to support this final element of the Framework. When there are signs and symbols that welcome people, when there are staff and community members who are aware of their biases and actively work to change them, when there are policies that call people to account, when there is representation among staff and leadership then a culture of safety for people of diverse backgrounds can be built.

By building a culture, we convey that:

- Everyone has the right to feel safe, cultural safety is everyone's responsibility
- Understanding is a priority in our communication
- Human experiences are more valuable than meeting KPIs
- We have a healthy relationship with the word racism and don't take it personally when identified
- We understand how racism is experienced and the impact on people
- It is safe for people, especially diverse communities, to speak about their experiences and their needs
- People from diverse communities have equal ownership of spaces and are able to facilitate change from their experiences in community.

How do we create culturally safe spaces?

Here are some ideas to consider:

- Use visual signs to acknowledge traditional owners of the land your organisation operates on.
- Begin formal gatherings and meetings with "Acknowledgement of Country".
- Consider the needs of First Nations people accessing your space through consultation and representation.
- Signs that welcome people of diverse backgrounds backed by diversity amongst members of staff create representation.
- Dietary needs for staff and communities are catered to respectfully (eg. Halal, Vegetarian, Kosher etc).
- Make available at least one space that has the flexibility of use. This can be utilised for varying needs of individuals (eg. a space that can be used for worship, breastfeeding privately etc).
- Offer modifications to uniforms or dress codes if required for cultural and religious needs.
- Resource for ongoing cultural safety training opportunities for staff.
- Actively seek input from staff and communities of diverse backgrounds.
- Believe and acknowledge the person who reports racism, then take action.
- Create an environment where conversations about racism can happen
- Check your own unconscious biases, microaggressions, stereotypes and assumptions.
- Embed cultural safety principles in the development of policies and procedures.

Feedback and logo

These feedback mechanisms were developed for Morella Community Centre to invite centre users to share their experiences. Ongoing feedback helps us to monitor whether the Centre is culturally safe at any one point. These also inform the need for training, policy change, decision making or other updates required for the current space or service to make it accessible for the community. The QR-code feedback is an anonymous online form for the community to use. The paper-based form is for community members who prefer a non-digital response or prefer to use a language other than English.

A logo was developed through the Safer Communities project as a sign to identify an organisation or community as a culturally safe space and express your ongoing commitment to keep it safe.

For more information on how to customise this logo and feedback forms for your organisation or community space, please contact us.

We aspire to be Culturally Safe

Because this space belongs to the community and you belong here

Please tell us if you:

feel culturally unsafe
experienced racism
have feedback about how we can be better

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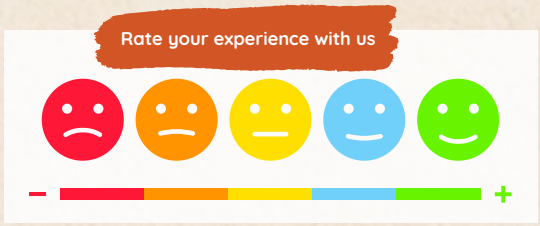

If not English, what language will you be filling this form in

Tell us if there a time you did not feel safe or included?

How was your experience with Morella and the staff?

How can we improve?

This space belongs

AND YOU BELONG HERE

to the community

Morella Community Centre's Safer Communities Project "Standing together Parafield Gardens – Families, children and young people" was funded by the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources.