

Cultural Diversity Policy

Reviewed: July 2020
Upcoming review: July 2023

SCOPE

This policy applies to all clients, management, staff, and visitors of Brides Alliance.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to clients, management, staff, and visitors of Bridges Alliance to ensure they are aware of and support that diversity is recognised, valued, and respected.

Bridges Alliance recognises, respects, and values the diversity of its staff, clients, and the community in which it operates.

POLICY

1. Definitions
2. Principles
3. Outcomes
4. Risk Management
5. Policy Implementation
6. Policy Detail
7. Legal Responsibilities
8. Client attributes
9. Aboriginal People
10. Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Cultural Diversity Policy

1. Definitions

Culturally and linguistically diverse refers to different linguistic, religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Cultural diversity embraces Indigenous Australian and multicultural perspectives.

Culturally secure ways of working respect the legitimate rights, values and expectations of people and acknowledge the diversity within and between communities living in remote, regional, and metropolitan areas.

Diversity refers to aspects of people such as beliefs, attitudes, languages, social circumstances, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender history, health status and age.

Inclusive language is free of bias, discrimination and avoids stereotyping and mistaken assumptions about people on the basis of their, sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, breast feeding, sexual orientation, gender history, health status, race, nationality, colour or ethnic origin, age, religious or political conviction, impairment or disability, family responsibility or family status.

2. Principles

2.1 Valuing diversity contributes to better outcomes for clients and their families and carers.

2.2 Information about the organisation and its services and programs is accessible to individuals and groups with specific diversity attributes.

2.3 Individuals seeking support from Bridges Alliance are provided with support that is free from stigma, discrimination, and stereotyping.

2.4 Bridges Alliance is committed to providing sensitive and relevant services for clients with diverse needs.

2.5 Management, staff, volunteers, contractors, clients, and visitors of Bridges Alliance will not tolerate unlawful discrimination.

3. Outcomes

3.1 Bridges Alliance practices are free from discrimination.

3.2 Staff treat all clients equally with a welcoming, non-judgemental, and professional attitude.

3.3 A diverse, flexible, and creative work environment exists in which Bridges Alliance actively acknowledges, supports, encourages and values diversity.

3.4 Services and programs provided by Bridges Alliance are communicated, relevant, accessible, and effective for a broad spectrum of individuals with diverse needs.

Cultural Diversity Policy

4. Risk Management

4.1 Bridges Alliance will ensure this policy does not breach any of its legal obligations.

4.2 The management and staff ensure decisions and actions relating to diversity are transparent and respectful.

4.3 All management, staff and volunteers are made aware of this policy during orientation/induction. Management and staff are provided with ongoing support and professional development to assist them to implement diversity policies and practice effectively.

4.5 This policy will be reviewed in line with Bridges Alliance quality improvement program and/or relevant legislative changes.

5. Policy Implementation

5.1 This policy is developed in consultation with all clients, stakeholders, staff and approved by the management.

5.2 This policy is to be part of all staff orientation processes and all staff and volunteers are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy.

5.3 This policy should be referenced in relevant policies, procedures, and other supporting documents to ensure that it is familiar to all staff and actively used.

6. Policy Detail

6.1 Bridges Alliance uses diversity sensitive practices and provides all clients with a welcoming, inclusive environment.

6.2 As far as is practicable, the client determines disclosures regarding personal diversity, and Bridges Alliance in line with our Privacy and Confidentiality policy maintains confidentiality.

6.3 Staff understand and use diversity sensitive client communication strategies.

7. Legal responsibilities

Bridges Alliance policies and practices are free from discrimination and comply with anti-discrimination legislation, including:

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1996 (Commonwealth)*
- *NDIS Practice Standards (2018)*
- *Industrial Relations Act 1996 (NSW)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 (NSW)*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth)*

Cultural Diversity Policy

8. Client attributes

8.1 Management, staff and volunteers make themselves aware of specific issues related to, and respond effectively to, diversity aspects of clients, including but not limited to:

- Cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- Aboriginality
- Sexuality
- Gender/gender history
- Age
- Health
- Disability (physical, intellectual, and others)
- Religious and spiritual beliefs

8.2 In supporting clients with diverse needs, staff acknowledge all personal, cultural, and social issues and support clients by ensuring referral to and liaison with appropriate services, if requested.

8.3 Bridges Alliance promotes and provides access to information about its services in a manner that is likely to reach potential clients with diverse needs.

9. Aboriginal People

9.1 Bridges Alliance staff have an understanding of the specific cultural and historical patterns that have structured Aboriginal peoples' lives in the past and the ways in which these patterns continue to be expressed in contemporary Australia.

9.2 Culturally secure ways of working with Aboriginal people, their families and communities are used by the organisation, ensuring treatment and services:

- Incorporates an Aboriginal holistic concept of health and wellbeing
- Are grounded in an Aboriginal understanding of the historical factors, including traditional life, the impact of colonisation and the ongoing effects
- Aim to strengthen Aboriginal family systems of care, control, and responsibility
- Address culturally secure approaches to harm reduction
- Work from within empowerment principles
- Understand the need for developing rapport and trust with Aboriginal people to better provide care and services

9.3 Bridges Alliance acknowledges the complexity of the factors contributing to the issues faced by Aboriginal people and seeks to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people by facilitating partnerships and collaboration between government, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies, and individuals.

Cultural Diversity Policy

10. Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Background

10.1 Bridges Alliance considers issues of culture and diversity in the delivery of programs and services.

10.2 Bridges Alliance involves other services to support the needs of culturally diverse clients and is aware of potential issues when considering using an interpreter. Clients concerns may include confidentiality, the interpreter coming from their own community or being known to them, and difficulty translating some languages accurately.

10.3 Staff are aware of the potential need to include family members in treatment, particularly if the client comes from a collectivist perspective and requests family involvement.

10.4 The ways we improve cultural competency in our services include:

- Working in a person-centred way that allows reflection on assumptions about culture and language.
- Supporting clients and families from CALD backgrounds understand concepts like treatment or service provision.
- Support clients on issues such as shame and the impact it may have on clients or their caregivers seeking support.
- Support clients and their caregivers who have experienced cross-generational conflict and support them in with the new roles and freedoms that they may be coming to terms with.
- Develop relationships with relevant community organisations and services to address access issues for CALD clients.

10.4 The information we display and produce is in simple and plain English, uses assistive technology and community languages, when required.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed every three years or as required.