

Learning Guide

Support for different cultures



28544 Provide support to people from different cultures in a health or wellbeing setting

Level 3

5 credits

Name:

Workplace:

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Introduction

Supporting people in the way they prefer is important. This learning guide will assist you to provide support to people from different cultures in a health or wellbeing setting.

How to use your learning guide

This guide supports your learning and prepares you for the unit standard assessment. The activities should be used as a general guide for learning.

This guide relates to the following unit standard:

- 28544 Provide support to people from different cultures in a health or wellbeing setting (level 3, 5 credits).

This guide is yours to keep. Make it your own by writing notes that help you remember things, or where you need to find more information.

Follow the tips in the notes column.

You may use highlight pens to show important information and ideas, and think about how this information applies to your work.

You might find it helpful to talk to colleagues or your supervisor.

Finish this learning guide before you start on the assessment.

What you will learn

This topic will help you to:

- provide support to people from different cultures than your own.
- understand the different cultural needs and preferences.
- provide support in a way that shows respect for the person and meets their cultural preferences.

What you will need

To complete this topic, you will need:

- this learning guide.
- your trainee assessment for this topic.
- details on the people you support of different cultures.

What is culture?

In a support role, understanding and respecting another person's culture allows support tasks to be carried out in a way that is effective, safe, non-threatening and considerate. This approach involves treating people equally but individually, so that people feel that their needs, including cultural needs, have been met.

Culture is a word used to describe the socially transmitted beliefs, values, customs, behaviour patterns and practices characteristic of a particular group of people. Culture contributes significantly to the way you live, your language and communication, how you dress, what you eat, the way you conduct important ceremonies such as weddings and funerals and the manners and rules that you live by.

Culture is something that you learn from your family and your surroundings. It is important because it helps people to define their identity. It contributes to who people are, and to the communities, groups or organisations that they see themselves belonging to. These communities and groups will have a culture that gives them a common framework of meaning, including how people communicate and interact with each other. We all have some factors in our lives that are shared with other groups.

Shared cultural understanding means people from the same culture can read 'signals' such as body language, gestures, where people choose to position themselves, words that are said or not said. This ability helps people to know what others are thinking or feeling or why they are behaving in a particular manner.

People's culture influences the way that they perceive, interpret, express and respond to their situation and surroundings.



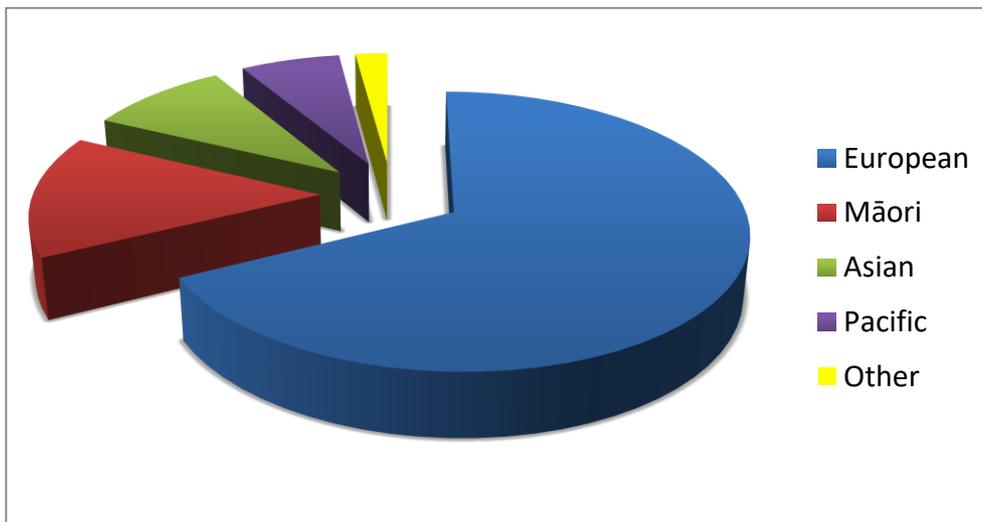
New Zealand is a multicultural society

Our workforce represents many cultures.

Diverse cultural groups

New Zealand has a diverse cultural population. The census, which is carried out by Statistics New Zealand, categorises people living in New Zealand into ethnic groups. The four largest groups are, in order of size, New Zealand European, Māori, Asian, and Pacific people.

You may think of yourself as a 'Kiwi' or 'New Zealander' or 'Pakaha' but you would be a New Zealand European for census purposes. Pacific people come from (by NZ population size order) Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau and Tuvalu.



New Zealand's ethnic makeup at the 2013 Census was:

74.0% of the population identified as European.

14.9% of the population identified as Māori.

11.8% of the population identified as Asian.

7.4% of the population identified as Pacific.

1.2% of the population identified with other ethnic groups.

New Zealand has over 150 different ethnic groups and there are over 60 languages spoken.

A person's ethnicity is based on belonging to a group or population with shared cultural and social characteristics. For example, country of origin, racial, tribal or national affiliations, language, religious beliefs, kinship, heritage or ancestry, culture.

There are many other groups that form a culture with distinct beliefs, values, customs, behaviour patterns and practices. Other cultures may be based on the following.

- Age – for example, a youth culture, or an elderly culture.
- Disability – the deaf community, for example, has a distinct culture with a recognised language (sign language), collective values and behaviour patterns and practices that make up a social etiquette.
- Sexual orientation – whether a person is straight, gay, bisexual or transgender.
- Occupation – some areas of work encompass their own cultures, for example, the army.
- Organisational background – whether a person expects to work for financial gain or the good of the community.

People may identify with more than one culture at the same time. For example, a person could be elderly, deaf and of Pacific Island descent.

Every person is an individual, and cultural identity is an important part of that individuality. When there is a mix of cultures, a mutual understanding of any differences in ways of communicating and behaving, and of different beliefs and attitudes, will have a significant impact on how people relate. It will also have a significant effect on the quality of support that can be provided to people in a health or wellbeing setting.



Supporting different cultures

For support workers, understanding how views are shaped by culture will help you to expect and acknowledge that there will be differences between you and the people you support. Being able to accept and respect these differences will improve communication and improve the quality of life for the people you support.

Here are some examples.

- In Māori culture, the head is the most sacred part of the body. If it is absolutely necessary to touch a person's head because of the support you are giving, you need to ask for permission first. Māori women also prefer the assistance of other females if their bodies are to be exposed such as in going to the toilet or bathing.
- Doctors and caregivers are held in very high regard by some Pacific peoples. Sometimes, an answer to a question may be what people think the doctor or caregiver wants to hear, which may compromise the accuracy of a response.

As you read through examples from other cultures that are discussed in this workbook, think about how they may relate to work practices. You may have experience of particular aspects or you may be able to think of other examples from the cultures of people who you support.

The kind of information that will be helpful to your work practices includes:

- how introductions are made and how people prefer to be addressed.
- common greetings used.
- how you present yourself by the way you are dressed.
- how much time to allow for a visit.
- whether shoes should be worn inside the house.
- what language is spoken and whether translation may be needed for either spoken or written material.
- whether you should accept food or drink that may be offered.
- how much eye contact is acceptable.
- ways to avoid causing unintentional offence.

Your own culture will influence how you interact with other people. When supporting and working with people from other cultures:

- think about your own culture and its implications for your work practices.
- respect the people you work with and the people you support.
- accept, even if you do not understand, other people's cultural beliefs, values and practices.
- be interested in and learn about other cultures.

The key thing is always to have an open frame of mind and a willingness to learn.

Knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and behaviour of people from another culture can come from:

- talking to the person you are supporting and the person's family/whānau. Explain that you want to learn and ask them to tell you what is important to them.
- listening to the person and the person's family/whānau.
- learning about the beliefs and behaviour of that cultural group.
- showing respect for the preferences and needs of others.

Your local library and/or community centre are good places to look for information. The internet can be another valuable resource both for general information about a culture and searching for understanding of a specific issue.

For example:

- www.asianz.org.nz/
- www.iman.gen.nz/ (Muslim)
- www.minpac.govt.nz/ (Pacific)
- www.refugeeservices.org.nz/home
- www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz/oeawebsite.nsf/wpg_url/Community-Directory-Index

Code of Rights

The Code of Health and Disability Consumers' Rights (1996) is often more simply called 'the Code of Rights' or 'the Code'. There should be a copy in your workplace.

Being elderly or disabled, and/or living in a country where the language and culture is different from their own, can put people in a vulnerable position.

There are ten rights in the Code of Rights. **Three of these rights** are of particular importance with respect to cultural identity.

1 The right to be treated with respect

The Code states that people should be treated with respect, which includes respect for their culture, values, beliefs and privacy. You can help meet this right by:

- acknowledging and using a person's preferred name.
- knowing people's values and acting on this knowledge so that you do not offend them.

2 The right to freedom from discrimination, coercion, harassment and exploitation

Discrimination is when one person is treated differently from another in a way that is unreasonable. For example, if a person tells you that he is homosexual, it should not affect the way in which you provide care or support.

10 The right to make a complaint about services in a way that is easy and will not have an adverse effect on how the person is treated.

Culture-related issues may result in a person wishing to make a complaint. Specialist advocacy services are available to help and are free.

It is worth noting that, while it is accepted practice in New Zealand to make a complaint in order to improve a service, people in some cultures are very reluctant to make a complaint. An advocate may be able to find a more acceptable resolution to ensure that a person's rights are being respected.

They will listen to a complaint, provide information, help to identify and clarify issues, explore options available to resolve issues and provide support in actions taken to resolve issues. More information can be found at <http://advocacy.hdc.org.nz>

Cultural preferences

Culture is a matter of personal choice or preference. These preferences are described in more detail in the following examples.

As you read each preference example, think about your own cultural background. You can make notes about your own preferences in the space provided to give you stronger understanding of your cultural background.

Preference: Food

Some preferences to consider

- Foods eaten at certain times of the day.
- Foods eaten at celebrations, festivals, holidays and special occasions.
- How food is served, for example, individual plates or in communal dishes for everyone to share.
- Utensils used to eat food with.
- Foods which are appropriate and not appropriate to eat.
- Foods identified with that culture.

Notes on your own preferences

Example 1: New Zealand European

- Usually have three meals a day with snacks in between.
- Prefers cereals and toast at breakfast.
- Traditional foods eaten at Christmas include turkey, ham and pavlova.
- Prefers an individual plate of food rather than sharing of communal dishes.
- Prefers to eat with a knife and fork.
- May be vegetarian or vegan.
- Identifies pineapple lumps, kiwifruit, vegemite and pikelets as belonging to this culture.
- Has BBQs in the summer.

Example 2: Thailand

- Usually have three meals a day with snacks in between.
- Breakfast may be rice porridge, an omelet or meat with rice.
- Food may include glazed cashew nuts, fried chicken and rice layer cake.
- Families eat communally, with dishes being placed on a table for everyone to share.
- Food is eaten with a fork and spoon. Chopsticks are used for noodle dishes.
- There are variations in food between the four main regions of Thailand.
- Rice is served with almost every meal.
- Identifies fish sauce, chili peppers, sticky rice and seafood as belonging to this culture.

Preference: Clothing

Some preferences to consider

- Clothes that are worn every day.
- Clothes that are worn for special occasions such as holidays, weddings or celebrations.
- Beliefs about what is an appropriate amount of body to be covered by clothing, both at home and in public.
- Clothing differences between men and women.
- Clothing identified with that culture.

Notes on your own preferences

Example 1: New Zealand European

- For formal/work wear men wear jackets, trousers and shirts; women wear jackets, skirts, dresses. Shorts and t-shirts are typically worn in the summer for casual wear.
- Is comfortable in clothing that reveals parts of the body, such as shorts and a t-shirt.
- Believes it is important to wear 'good or best' clothes when going to places such as a church.
- Identifies jandals, gumboots, 'swanndris' and black singlets as belonging to this culture.

Example 2: Muslim

- Muslim women may cover their entire bodies apart from their hands and face. Some may choose to wear a veil or burqa (a full body-cover).
- Physical contact between a woman, and a man who is not her husband, is forbidden. Therefore for a woman, assistance from a male nurse or support worker will not be acceptable for Muslim women.
- Muslim people do not greet each other with a hug.

Preference: Communication

Some preferences to consider

- The different way we speak to different people, such as parents, grandparents, children, elders or leaders.
- Non-verbal gestures or body language.
- The position that the eyes, head or body.
- Appropriate greetings and use of titles.
- Words, phrases or sayings identified with that culture.

Notes on your own preferences

Example 1: New Zealand European

- A handshake is a greeting used by both men and women.
- It is important to speak in a respectful tone and not use swear words when communicating with parents, family members and community leaders.
- Eye contact is appropriate when speaking to other people.
- It is appropriate to address people by their first name.
- Identifies expressions such as 'cool', 'she'll be right', or 'ladies bring a plate' as belonging to this culture.

Example 2: Indian

- Age is respected and the oldest person is greeted first.
- When greeting or leaving the expression 'namaste' or 'vanakkam' is said with a smile. It is accompanied with traditional gesture of placing both palms together at chest level and giving a slight bow of the head. Men may shake hands with other men.
- When leaving 'goodbye' is not used – rather it is - 'I'll go and comeback.'

Preference: Celebrations

Some preferences to consider

- Celebrations that are held.
- How celebrations are held.

Notes on your own preferences

Example 1: New Zealand European

- Family celebrations, ie weddings, anniversaries, birth of children, major birthdays such as 21st, 40th, 70th etc.
- Other major celebrations include Easter and Christmas.
- ANZAC Day is day of remembrance, and attending memorial services.
- It is common for alcohol to be drunk during a celebration and birthdays are usually celebrated with a cake, gifts and a party.

Example 2: Fiji

- Some people return to Fiji to celebrate or participate in ceremonies which are not held in New Zealand. Songs and dances are important parts of a celebration.
- Many cultural values and practices and traditional family customs are maintained through religious support networks and family interaction.
- Communal feasts may be cooked in an outdoor oven pit called a 'lovo'.

Preference: Customs

Some preferences to consider

The customs that are appropriate and followed in these situations:

- the home.
- social situations.
- formal situations.
- your place of work.

Notes on your own preferences

Example 1: New Zealand European

- It is appropriate for both men and women to shake hands when they are first introduced.
- It is appropriate to take a gift, food, or bottle of wine when eating at another person's home.
- Shoes may be left on in the home.
- A group of people will donate a small amount of money to celebrate special occasions for their work colleagues.
- People will gather in someone's home or at a pub to watch a big sporting event.
- It is acceptable to start a meal without having first said a prayer or blessing.

Example 2: Pacifika

- Family is valued extremely highly and older members of the family and community are respected.
- The collective spirit (wairua) of relatives and friends is believed to assist the healing process if a person becomes seriously ill.
- Older Pacific people will often want family support when they are in a health or wellbeing setting, which may make it difficult to maintain patient confidentiality.

Preference: Death and dying

Some preferences to consider

- The beliefs that exist around death.
- The customs or rituals that should be carried out for a dying person.
- How the dead body is cared for.
- Funeral arrangements that are made.

Notes on your own preferences

Example 1: New Zealand European

- The immediate family usually gathers around a dying family member.
- Hospital staff or a funeral home will often wash and prepare the body.
- A choice is made whether the person will be buried or cremated.
- A funeral service is held either at a church or at a funeral home.
- People gather after the service for refreshments, convey their sympathy and catch up with loved ones.
- Flowers are often sent to the family as a mark of sympathy and respect.

Example 2: Maori

- A traditional welcome (powhiri) is used when people go on to a marae.
- After death, there is a three-day tangihanga (funeral) period. The body is not left alone during this time, to give people company in their final days on earth.

Example 3: Japanese

- Death of a family member is marked by a wake. Mourners take a special envelope with money to give to the family.
- The body will be set up in front of the family altar and incense may be burned. The family will stay with the body until it is placed in the casket. Items will be placed with the body.
- The funeral is usually held a day after the wake.

 **Write**

My notes →

Choose two people you are supporting who come from different cultures from your own. Find out about their preferences. You may have to ask them.

Preferences	Person 1:
Food	
Clothing:	
Communication	
Customs	
Celebrations	
Death and dying	

My notes 

Preferences	Person 2:
Food	
Clothing:	
Communication	
Customs	
Celebrations	
Death and dying	

Communicating with people of different cultures

Effective communication allows us to build strong relationships with people of different cultures.

This factor is particularly important in a support role, where effective communication can be crucial to a person's care, health and wellbeing.



Effective communication involves:

- conveying a clear message from one person to another.
- understanding the preferences and behaviour of that culture group.

Effectively communicating with a person from another culture depends on our personal knowledge and attitude. If we are open and friendly, there is a greater likelihood of positive and effective communication occurring.

When communicating with a person from another culture, it is important to be aware of the different preferences the person may have. These preferences may include:

- how you introduce yourself to the person.
- how you address that person.
- your body language and position.
- how you ask the person questions.
- how you respond to the person's questions.
- using plain language.

Introducing yourself

When introducing yourself to a person of another culture, the following guidelines may be helpful:

- greet the person, for example, 'good morning' or 'good evening.'
- use the appropriate greeting for the culture, if you know it.
- say your name.
- say what your role is and why you are there.
- ask the person (or family) what name the person would like to be called by.
- ask how to best say the person's name if unclear.
- speak clearly but not too slowly.
- smile and have a friendly but respectful manner.
- offer to shake hands only if it is appropriate for the person's culture and will not cause embarrassment.
- use eye contact appropriately. You may need to find out about the person's preferences so that you do not cause offence with too much eye contact.
- be aware of your body language and position.

Addressing the person

Address the person by his or her preferred name and the correct title (for example, Mr, Mrs, Miss, Frau, San). A person's personal plan should supply this information.

Some cultural groups also have specific ways of making introductions, for example, shaking hands, joining the palms of hands, smiling and bowing. If you are unsure, check the person's personal plan before meeting the person, or ask the person or a family member.

People from other cultures are more likely to respond when they feel they are being respected and valued as individuals.

Body language

It is important to be aware of your own body language when communicating with people from other cultures. Body language includes eye contact, facial expression, gestures, personal space and body positioning, posture and touch.

Eye contact

Europeans value eye contact and use it to indicate attentiveness and honesty. However over 70% of the world's population prefers not to have direct eye contact. Asian, Māori and Pacific groups treat the lowering of the eyes as a sign of respect.

Facial expressions

Facial expressions may not mean what you think they mean. For example, Japanese people can be straight-faced when happy. Some cultures may smile even when feeling angry or sad.

Gestures

Gestures can have different meanings in different cultures. For example, a 'thumbs-up' gesture is a signal of approval in many countries but an obscene gesture in others, such as Iran.

Japanese people will nod to indicate that they are listening. The gesture does not necessarily indicate understanding or agreement. People from some parts of India may shake their heads to show agreement.

Personal space and body positioning

The acceptable physical distance between people differs between cultures. For example, in the Middle East people of the same sex stand closer to each other than Europeans do, but people of the opposite sex stand much further apart.

In some cultures people show respect to others by keeping their head lower than the person who is being spoken to.

When you are talking with a person try to be on about the same level as the person you are communicating with. Squat or sit down by a person who is sitting in a chair or wheelchair, or who is lying on a bed.

Posture

Our posture sends a message to people. For example, for Muslim cultures it is offensive to sit with your feet pointing towards someone.

Touch

Different cultures will have different levels of comfort in terms of physical touching. A light touch on the upper arm is generally acceptable.

Using plain language

Using plain language is very important when communicating with people from different cultures. Every culture has its own set of phrases and expressions that has meaning to that group.

When communicating, it is important to:

- be aware of any cultural phrases or automatic responses that you may be using, for example, 'she'll be right.'
- avoid using technical or specialised terms that may be confusing or not understood.
- avoid sayings what may be confusing, for example, 'pull your socks up.'
- allow time if translation is required.

The 60-second rule

For people who do not speak English as their first language, it can take 60 seconds for people to go through an internal translation process.

People have to:

- hear the English words.
- translate the English into their language.
- think through the answer in their language.
- translate the answer into English.
- speak the answer in English.

If a person does not answer you immediately, it may be that the translation process is still occurring. Be patient and wait.

If it seems that the person is struggling with understanding your words, you may need to re-phrase the sentence.



Allow time for translation to occur.

Asking questions

When asking questions of the person, it is important to be aware of your emphasis, tone, volume, and the time needed for an answer.

‘Emphasis’ is the stress or weight placed on a word in a sentence to give it more importance.

Your tone can communicate your feelings (such as surprise, approval or frustration). People from other cultures may not understand the tone of your questions. Some languages, such as Chinese, place great importance on the tone that is used, and have more tones than English.

Your volume can indicate your feelings, for example, speaking loudly can imply frustration or anger.

Listen to the person. Gestures used by Europeans to indicate that they are listening may not always be understood in the same way by other cultures. They may use silence, stillness or looking away to show that they are listening.

Responding to questions

When responding to questions it is important to be aware of the boundaries of your role. You may be asked questions about a person’s treatment or life expectancy that it may not be appropriate for you to answer. If this happens, refer to your organisation’s policies and procedures. For those questions that are within your role to answer, it is important to answer clearly and with plain language that the person can understand.

 **Write**

Choose a person you are supporting from a different culture to yours, and write down how you communicate with this person to meet their cultural preferences.

How do you:	Answer:
Introduce yourself?	
Show respect?	
Position yourself if the person is in bed or in a wheelchair?	
Ask them questions?	
Answer their questions?	
Make sure you use language that is understood?	
If they speak another language what rule should you follow?	