



Culturally Competent Engagement Procedure

Introduction

This procedure supports culturally responsive and safe engagement with all clients, staff, and contractors, with particular emphasis on Māori, recognised as tāngata whenua of Aotearoa New Zealand.

It recognises:

- the importance of tikanga Māori, Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles, and culturally competent practice to improve mental health outcomes. The principles, shaped by and for Māori cultural engagement provide a sound foundation for engagement with clients (or colleagues, contractors etc) from other lands and cultures.
- that learning to engage in culturally competent ways is an ongoing process of becoming more than it is a skillset to be mastered on a definable timeline.

That this procedure therefore is partly aspirational does not equate to implying that it is optional but rather, SCP recognises that individuals will begin from unique starting points and proceed along different developmental pathways.

Although this procedure is specifically identified for Cultural Engagement with Māori, the same broad principles apply to engagement with other cultures.

1. Purpose

To create an environment of authentic, culturally appropriate engagement across all levels of the organisation—Management, Staff, and Subcontractors—promoting respect, autonomy, equity and partnership with Māori and other cultural groups.

2. Guiding Principles

- **Intent:** To create in SCP, a culture based on whanaungatanga (building relationships), rangatiratanga (self-determination), manaakitanga (showing respect and care), and kaitiakitanga (guardianship and protection) and seeking to promote ōritetanga (equity) for Māori and any who are disenfranchised or disadvantaged.

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- **Cultural safety and responsiveness** in all interactions, respecting cultural identity, values, and practices.
- **Whakawhānaungatanga (relationship building)** as foundational to engagement, especially with Māori clients, practitioners, whanau and iwi.
- **Ongoing cultural competency development** for all personnel.
- **Attention to profession-specific ethical standards** relating to cultural engagement.

3.Responsibilities

Responsibilities for everyone

- **Whanaungatanga (Relationships):**
 - Prioritise building relationships, especially with Māori (individuals, whanau, iwi, hapu).
 - Collaboration and trust are indicators of relationship health. (Explicitly, you do not engage in relationships to gain collaboration and trust; rather, they may emerge from relationships that are formed, built, maintained and repaired when misunderstanding or mis-steps have occurred.)
 - Understand the importance to Māori of not only their relationship with you, but their relationships with and obligations to others.
- **Rangatiratanga (Self Determination):**
 - Actively uphold self-determination, especially for Māori of
 - Autonomy – what will help and individual, whanau or other group to feel in control of their own behaviour and goals
 - Competence – what it is important (to them) to be able to master
 - Relatedness – what will help (them) to feel a sense of belonging and attachment to others
 - Together, this is about the kiritake/client’s informed choice of what will best serve their needs.
- **Kaitiakitanga (Guardianship and Protection):**
 - In interaction with Māori, be ready to be *in receivership* of Kaitiakitanga – as well as providing, as appropriate.
 - we need to be willing to give ourselves over to Kaitiakitanga, allowing Māori to hold us up, in as much as we are upholding their Kaupapa.
 - When Māori wellbeing may be negatively impacted by a decision or action, and especially when they may not be aware of it, to act as a custodian and protector of Māori and Māori interests (as determined by the Māori affected).
 - When external contract provisions or requirements may have particular negative impact on Māori in ways that are important to them, take an advocacy role (e.g. if a contract excluded the option to collaborate with whānau in delivery of care to a vulnerable individual)
- **Manaakitanga (Respect and Care):**
 - Recognise and respect Māori cultural values and practices and proactively demonstrate care in all interactions.
 - This may sometimes be expressed in hospitality, but Manaakitanga is much deeper than superficial courtesy.

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Responsibilities by Role

A. MANAGEMENT

- **Leadership and Commitment**
 - Demonstrate visible commitment to cultural engagement and equity, embedding Māori values such as manaakitanga (hospitality), kaitiakitanga (guardianship), and ōritetanga (equity) into organisational culture.
 - Ensure organisational policies and practices align with Māori health frameworks.
 - Facilitate Māori representation and voice in governance, planning, and decision-making processes.
 - Allocate resources for cultural training/supervision, Māori workforce development, and cultural support roles.
 - Support kaimahi Māori by recognising cultural responsibilities (e.g., organising hui, karakia) and factoring these into workloads.
 - Promote inclusive workplace practices that address systemic challenges faced by Māori staff.

- **Strategic Engagement**
 - Engage with iwi, hapū, and Māori mental health and social service providers to build partnerships and collaborative initiatives.
 - Monitor and evaluate cultural engagement effectiveness through regular reporting and feedback mechanisms.

- **New services under development for a contract or re-development of existing (not only services specifically intended for Māori):**
 - *Preparation:*
 - Reflect on the intended service/development and how it may be of assistance to Māori or impact on them in what locations.
 - Identify whether this is a national project (and needs input from all SCP managers) and may impact all Māori or whether this will primarily impact specific iwi.
 - Identify relevant relationships you have with Māori and whether there is someone who could/should be invited to assist (expect to pay regular consultation rates for the time involved).

 - *Internal Consultation*
 - Discuss and develop your ideas in cultural supervision.
 - Consult with SCP Lead Cultural Advisor for advice on how to engage with whom in what order and whether that should be yourself, with others or by others on your behalf.
 - Consult with other SCP managers as appropriate; they may have additional relationships or experience.

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- *Plan*
 - Plan engagement with iwi/Runanga as agreed; identifying relevant tikanga.
 - Prepare key questions and points for discussion of your overall idea; be prepared to
 - verify your information – and take onboard Māori epistemology (ways of developing and verifying knowledge) – potentially weaving perspectives together in a way that changes your idea
 - talk it through to be sure of mutual clarity,
 - ask if they see benefit for them now and offer your vision of the benefits
 - ask if they see alternatives that they believe may be preferable
 - be prepared to think together about how it might play out in the future
 - and be clear about any commitment sought/needed from them.
 - Set aside appropriate time for the meeting so that you are not rushed; if the meeting is at a Mārae that you have not previously been called onto, remember to allow the additional time required and be prepared for the specific kawa and tikanga.

- *Implementation*
 - Re/develop and implement the service collaboratively (with all relevant stakeholders), taking care to ensure each stakeholder feels properly heard and is kept informed.
 - Track outcomes and seek input to fine-tune service delivery.

B. STAFF

- **Fundamentals**
 - Communicate respectfully, regardless of a person’s position, apparent status, ethnicity or any other characteristics and take care to do your best to pronounce names correctly, taking particular care for Māori, Pasifika and other cultures.
 - Seek to build warm, professional relationships with all Providers, Contract personnel, Contractors and other stakeholders.
 - Learn common te Reo words and phrases for correct pronunciation and spelling, including appropriate use of the macron (set your computer’s language to Māori and be alert to the introduction of error via auto-correction features of your software).
 - Participate in available cultural learning opportunities.
 - If you are responsible for administrative duties, consider whether processes, forms etc. may be inadvertently more difficult / less usable for Māori.
 - If you are responsible for logistics for formal events, meetings or interviews, consult with your manager about requirements for opening and closing, additional seating (e.g. for whānau, kaumatua etc), catering including timing of kai (refreshments).
- **Cultural Competency and Practice**
 - Access and collaborate with Māori cultural support when working with Māori clients or whānau.

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- Respect and uphold the cultural values and protocols of clients, including offering/inviting appropriate karakia or waiata where relevant.
- Maintain awareness of own cultural biases and seek supervision or guidance to ensure cultural safety.
- **Ethical Obligations**
 - Adhere to profession-specific expectations for cultural competence and respect for client identity (e.g., Psychology, Medicine).
 - Ensure confidentiality and cultural protocols are observed in all client and whānau interactions.

C. SUBCONTRACTORS

- **General Cultural Expectations**
 - Agree to comply with SCP’s cultural engagement policies and procedures as a condition of contract.
 - Demonstrate cultural competence relevant to profession and client base, including knowledge of (at least) Māori health models and tikanga.
 - Participate in cultural competency training offered or required by SCP and/or by specific contracts.
 - Engage respectfully with Māori clients and whānau, incorporating tikanga and whakawhānaungatanga into service delivery.
 - Collaborate with cultural support personnel and escalate cultural concerns appropriately.
 - Uphold confidentiality and cultural safety standards consistent with professional and contractual obligations.
- **Working with clients of Māori, Pasifika and other cultures**
 - Your intake assessment needs to include an appropriate cultural assessment to understand their personal specific needs and cultural context. Do not assume that because someone is from a particular cultural background that they have particular perspectives or preferences.
 - Ensure that this assessment then informs how you work with this client:
 - How you tailor your interactional style to this individual
 - how you conduct other parts of whatever assessment is needed;
 - how you collaboratively interpret your client’s information;
 - what approaches you offer and choose together with your client
 - how you monitor progress
 - how you institute relationship repair if you become aware you have made a cultural misstep
 - Learn what kawa and tikanga may be important to the clients you most often work with and be ready to adapt responsively.
 - Develop a relationship with a local cultural supervisor and have regular cultural supervision. If you are unable to find a local cultural supervisor with availability, investigate the possibility of joining group cultural supervision.
 - If a specific situation calls for cultural knowledge outside what your cultural supervisor can offer, they may be able to put you in touch with someone else who can help; if not, contact your Manager who may connect you with an SCP senior cultural advisor.

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- With clients whose cultural identity is unfamiliar to you,
 - in your initial contact, ask what is important to them and how it is important
 - undertake some relevant learning before you next see that client
 - identify and engage with appropriate cultural supervision as needed

4. Cultural Competency Development

- *Training and Education*
 - Provide/support access to cultural competency training focusing on understanding self as culture-bearer, Māori mental/health, and culturally safe practice.
 - Encourage participation in wānanga, workshops, and reflective practice sessions.
 - Support development of bilingual or bicultural skills where possible.
- *Supervision and Support*
 - Facilitate clinical and cultural supervision that integrates cultural perspectives.
 - Encourage use of regular cultural supervision (more than solely reactive use of cultural advice)
 - Encourage reflective practice on cultural engagement and responsiveness.

5. Engagement with Māori Clients and Whānau

- *Tikanga-Based Engagement*
 - Employ assessment and engagement models that prioritise tikanga Māori and relationship-building over purely clinical frameworks.
 - Allow flexibility in service delivery to accommodate whānau involvement and Māori worldviews of health (e.g., Te Whare Tapa Whā, Te Wheke, Meihana).
 - Support whānau participation in care planning and decision-making.
- *Partnership and Protection*
 - Recognise, uphold and advocate for the rights of Māori to self-determination and culturally appropriate care.
 - Work collaboratively with Māori health providers and community organisations.

6. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

- Collect feedback from Māori clients, whānau, staff, and subcontractors regarding cultural engagement experiences.
- Use data to identify gaps and inform service development.
- Report outcomes and progress to management and governance groups.
- Review this procedure annually or as required to reflect evolving best practice and community expectations.

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