



SERVICE DELIVERY POLICY

E.13 Diversity and Cultural Awareness

REVIEWED: October 2022

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Mercy Services is committed to promoting a workplace and service environment that respects an individual's diversity of values, customs, cultures, and beliefs. Mercy Services' organisational values of dignity and justice promote each person's individuality and encourage positive relationships with one another. Mercy Services therefore seeks to be aware of the and support the diverse and cultural influence of staff and those we care for, recognising that we are all shaped by our cultural background, beliefs, and individual attributes. At the same time, Mercy Services appreciates that no individual can be reduced to a set of cultural norms and that their individual needs and preferences are most important and need to be respected.

This policy is to ensure that all people engaged with Mercy Services have equal access to Mercy Services' programs and that person-centred approaches are developed when appropriate to meet individual needs.

In line with the vision and values of Mercy Services is the commitment to diversity and inclusion among its employees, clients, residents, volunteers, and stakeholders is core to the care provided. Diversity and inclusion spreads across gender, ethnicity, culture, sexuality, physical or mental ability, educational background, socioeconomics, and other individual characteristics. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds
- People from racial, religious, ethnic or cultural backgrounds
- People with a disability (visible or non-visible)
- Sexual Orientation - Gay, Lesbian, Transgender/gender diverse, Bisexual or Intersex people

Record of policy development

Version	Date approved	Policy Changes
1.0	20.3.2017	Policy established for HCC
2.0	5.10.2021	Policy revised to incorporate all services as an organisational policy
3.0	1.11.2022	Policy revised to incorporate broader range of diversity and cultural inclusion

Responsibilities and delegations

This policy applies to	Staff and Volunteers
Specific responsibilities	Managers to promote awareness and practice in line with policy
Policy approval	Risk & Continuous Improvement Committee

Policy context – this policy relates to:	
Standards	NDIS Practice Standards Aged Care Quality & Safety Standards
Legislation	N/A
Contractual obligations	N/A
Organisation policies	All service delivery policies
Forms, record keeping, other documents	N/A
Policy reviewed	Every 3 years or if there are significant changes in organisational operations or legislative changes

Definitions

- i) **Diversity** describes the differences and uniqueness of all people. It can refer to demographic characteristics, such as age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, socioeconomic status, academic ability, or social origin. Diversity can also include personal characteristics such as disability, medical condition, carer's responsibilities, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, and any other characteristic of an individual. Lived experience of these diverse characteristics, particularly where they reflect those of our clients, is particularly valuable.
- ii) **Inclusion** refers to embracing and valuing all people, irrespective of their diversity and diverse characteristics. It is about providing equity and opportunities and not permitting discrimination or intolerance.

Policy Statement

Mercy Services will acknowledge the cultural diversity of those we support and who work for us to ensure their values are supported. To do this, Mercy Services will promote access to its services for all people, including those from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background. Mercy Services will support and encourage self-protective strategies and behaviours that consider all individual and cultural needs of those we support.

Mercy Services will, as far as is practical, accommodate the cultural, linguistic, and spiritual rights of those in our care. An understanding of the role of culture in consumer's lives is fundamental to providing flexible needs-based and consumer centred care and services.

People who may not be able to articulate their needs effectively through use of the English language will be given the opportunity to work with an interpreter. Mercy Services employees and volunteers will respect clients' rights to decline interpreting services.

Diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness training form part of Mercy Services induction for staff to provide them with information or strategies to respond to any particular barriers accounted by people from CALD backgrounds.

Service Planning

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), is responsible for ensuring that annual operational planning:

- facilitates community participation in service design and development;
- identifies the diverse needs of those who it supports and their requirements;
- communicates Mercy Services' planning objectives in the preferred language of the people it supports and their families
- considers cultural aspects and practices of those supported when delivering services; and
- offers a variety of ways to provide feedback.

Care Managers, Coordinators, Registered Nurses and Service Managers will take into consideration the cultural, linguistic, and religious needs and preferences of clients or residents with input from their families, carer, or support network.

Interpreters

Mercy Services will confirm communication preferences of the clients or residents whom we support. Mercy Services employees can utilise written information to those who it supports in their preferred language – where available. In cases where the individual does not speak English, an interpreter service will be used to ensure that the individual understands the assessment and review process, the services being offered, and the general information provided e.g., in handbooks and brochures.

Upon referral, supported consumers and their families are informed of their right to access professional interpreting services at any time, and of the availability of telephone interpreting services.

The need for an interpreter service will be clearly identified in the individual's file.

Professional interpreting services will be offered to those we support:

- when Care Plans are developed and reviewed;
- whenever informed consent is required; and
- as requested by individuals and/or their families, carer, or authorised representative.

Health Care Interpreters are available free of charge to assist those supported by Mercy Services who have limited or no English. Multicultural Health Liaison Programs work across clinical units to provide support for CALD background consumers in service planning and education, and advice for staff.

The Hunter New England Health Service Multicultural Health Service can assist with Health Care Interpreters in Mercy Service's operational area. Health Care Interpreters are available between 9:00am and 5:00pm, Monday to Friday. They can be booked by phoning the Booking Clerk on 02 4924 6285 or by email: HNELHD-MulticulturalHealth@health.nsw.gov.au

After-hours emergency service is available through Lifeline on 13 11 14.

When engaging an interpreter (including sign language interpreters) for those we support, the following should be considered:

1. If those supported present with little or limited English, enquire tactfully if they wish to use an interpreter (they may not know that a free and confidential service is available).
2. Each person supported may have varying levels of English understanding, particularly when discussing health or clinical matters. Ensure that those supported understand instructions using the feedback method. Cultural and linguistic diversity does not indicate a consumers' level of understanding.
3. Reconfirm the language interpreter required, particularly if this may be a specific dialect of a region.
4. Advise the Health Care Interpreter Service with as much notice as possible prior to the appointment. If an appointment is cancelled by the person supported or staff member, please let the interpreter service know as soon as possible so that the interpreter can be notified.
5. Document on the individual's' records that an interpreter is required and note the language they speak other than English.

Staff Cultural Capability

Mercy Services encourages the active recruitment of staff from diverse backgrounds or staff who have previous experience in service delivery to people from CALD backgrounds.

The leadership team and service managers are responsible for supporting the cultural, linguistic, and spiritual needs of employees. Training is available to staff on diversity and cultural inclusion as required. Key commitments from Mercy Services include:

- ensuring a supportive workplace that respects and values diversity of customs, cultures, and beliefs; and
- ensuring that its services are delivered in a manner that respects and values the customs, cultures, and beliefs of its clients.

When a potential client or resident is referred to Mercy Services, staff will actively consult with the consumer to identify any cultural, linguistic or diversity needs as part of planning their service. Flexible and consumer centred approaches are to be adopted in responding to requests where appropriate, respecting any cultural or linguistic needs.

Culturally Appropriate Care

All Mercy Services employees and volunteers are made aware of the need to be culturally respectful when providing certain health and personal care procedures. Different cultural representations and perceptions on certain health conditions (e.g., dementia) are taken into consideration when discussing the subject with individuals and their families.

Where culturally appropriate care is identified for those who Mercy Services supports, culturally appropriate therapies will be provided that promote and enhance the quality of life for individuals from CALD backgrounds. This includes consideration of providing culturally appropriate food services that meet individuals' cultural and religious needs or preferences concerning diet and food preparation.

Mercy Services actively seeks information from those who it supports or where appropriate their family/carer about their customs, culture, and beliefs where it may affect the provision of service (e.g., religious rituals or the need for staff to be of the same gender as the individual). This information is obtained from consumers on admission and strategies documented in their care plan on maintaining a consumers' cultural and diversity needs.

Family and Cultural Supports

The emotional support needs of those who Mercy Services supports will be identified and accounted for in their care with regular review, with input from family members and carers (with consent). Access to services are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure there are no barriers to people from all backgrounds.

Mercy Services will assist those who it supports on an ongoing basis to continue participation with cultural and other support networks, with referral to relevant groups to ensure cultural connections are maintained. Staff involved with the consumers care are to be sensitive to

norms, beliefs, and traditions about receiving help from outside family networks including those associated with critical life events.

Spiritual Support

Mercy Services supports the current and desired practices and beliefs of consumers and will schedule reviews of spiritual needs where requested.

Where appropriate, the desired practices and beliefs of individuals are noted in their file. Mercy Services assists those it supports to maintain religious networks and facilitate appropriate religious representation as required.

The impact of religion on all services, including health and personal care and food services, is to be documented (e.g., Care Plan, file note, roster) and followed in line with a consumers' wishes.