

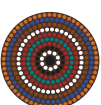


AWARENESS

Before engaging, stop and take some time to identify barriers or factors that may need to be considered when supporting the client.

Be aware that the client may be experiencing layers of social issues and not just the issue relating to their disability.

Practicing cultural humility will open opportunities to build genuine and meaningful relationships with your client. Take time to reflect on your own understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, underlying social issues, culture and respectful engagement.



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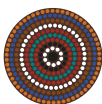


RECOGNISE

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not use the word disability as a part of their language.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability are generally not excluded from their communities or separated if they have an impairment and are cared for no differently from other members within community.

"Our young fulla is hard of hearing and is not listening properly when we talk to him, we are not sure why but something isn't right there. Everyone knows to tap him on the shoulder first and then he can hear what you are saying".



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RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships First ...

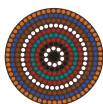
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are generally more interested in who you are rather than what you do. To build rapport allow your client to get to know and understand you as a person.

"Before you share who you are and where you come from, is there anything you would like to know about me?"

Doing some research demonstrates your interest in learning more about your client's community, cultural connections and protocols.

Business Second...

- *Acknowledge your client's existing community and kinship ties.*
- *I am here to support my client first and will engage with family and community if my client is happy for me to do so.*
- *Reassure your client that their story is safe with you.*
- *Be honest and open if there is something you do not understand.*
- *Find out how your client would like to be addressed.*



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LISTENING

Listening demonstrates respect and opens the opportunity for trust to build in the relationship.

Storytelling and sharing are generally the preferred way in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will communicate an issue or concern.

Being engaged in conversation and listening attentively will support you in identifying the client's issues.

Some clients might hold back at first or only provide brief information. This could be because they don't feel safe or because they are unsure of where their story will end up.

- *Have I informed the client of our privacy and confidentiality policies?*
- *Is the meeting space culturally safe for my client?*



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LET'S YARN

Now is the time to reach out and yarn with the client.

Determine with your client how they would like you to engage with them.

The language you use when you are speaking is important.

Be clear about your advocacy role and its purpose.

Reassure the client that their stories are safe.



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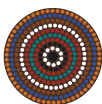
YOUR STORY MATTERS

Thank your client for trusting you with their story.

Empower your client through education, information and awareness.

Ensure that your client understands their rights.

Encourage your client to share information within their own community.



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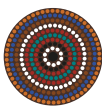


THE JOURNEY

Be flexible, clear and transparent throughout the advocacy journey.

Speak on your commitment and responsibilities and provide time frames.

With permission, support warm referrals to other agencies if underlying social issues or trauma are identified.



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