

# GUIDE: Tips for talking about cultural diversity

Follow these simple tips to demonstrate how best to engage with diverse groups and lead your organisation/department by example.

<b>Presentations and speeches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• before delivering a presentation or speech, assess the event and location to ensure you use the most appropriate Acknowledgement of Country</li> <li>• know your audience: for example, self-deprecating humour may be an acceptable 'ice-breaker' to some audiences but maybe considered disrespectful and not taken seriously among some cultural groups and audiences</li> <li>• use diverse voices to represent your organisation/service. Setting up a mentoring/sponsorship network for public speaking training will encourage and enable new voices</li> <li>• research and understand the cultural groups you will address. Providing culturally relevant information and using culturally appropriate greetings will ensure respectful engagement at events.</li> </ul>
<b>Formal meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an Acknowledgement of Country or Welcome to Country should be incorporated at the start of all meetings with staff within your organisation and external meetings</li> <li>• assess who will be included within the meeting, as in some cultural groups seating position is paramount</li> <li>• understand what form of meeting will be most appropriate for the participants</li> <li>• produce a clear agenda, speaking order and defined process for participation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider the most suitable meeting structure to ensure participation of discussion, i.e. a large formal meeting or a small informal meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>In the office</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure your organisation has the correct protocols in place to support culturally diverse names</li> <li>use appropriate forums for enabling conversations about cultural diversity to produce an environment of trust and safety</li> <li>use appropriate terminology regarding specific cultural communities</li> <li>ensure your organisation has appropriate hiring policies to support a culturally diverse workforce through engagement with culturally diverse communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if you are unsure about appropriate naming protocols or terms, simply ask 'What do you prefer to be called?' and use the stated name</li> <li>never give nicknames or abbreviate names without permission</li> <li>speak clearly and at normal volume</li> <li>use simple language</li> <li>know whether you should offer your hand</li> <li>ask open questions to check for understanding</li> <li>be aware of different versions of English</li> <li>avoid double negatives or sequential questions</li> <li>avoid jargon, idioms, slang or acronyms</li> <li>avoid plays on words, culturally specific humour or sarcasm.</li> </ul>
<b>Get advice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>call on the knowledge of your Human Resources team, culturally diverse colleagues, specialist cultural consultants or government advisory services such as Multicultural NSW if you need help</li> <li>continue to learn and develop knowledge, both internally and externally.</li> </ul>



<b>What to avoid</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staying within your comfort zone and avoiding engagement with those who represent cultural diversity</li> <li>• relying on a single 'cultural adviser' on your staff to represent an entire community and provide insights</li> <li>• expecting that translations or interpreted communications from your service are all that matter. It is equally important that your service can respond in a culturally appropriate manner</li> <li>• always speaking on behalf of others. Let others tell their stories and amplify the voices of culturally capable staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Website references</b>	<a href="https://www.dca.org.au/research/project/wordsatwork-building-inclusion-through-power-language">https://www.dca.org.au/research/project/wordsatwork-building-inclusion-through-power-language</a> <a href="https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/">https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/</a>

