

Cultural Safety

CLBC Service Provider Practice Guide



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Community Living BC's (CLBC) *Cultural Safety Policy* represents the first step on its journey, as we work together with service providers towards Reconciliation and implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA or *Declaration Act*). CLBC would like to acknowledge with humility and gratitude all those who have helped make this first step possible and continue to walk with us including, but not limited to:

- Members of the CLBC Indigenous Advisory Committee
- Members of the CLBC Elders Advisory Council
- BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS)
- BC CEO Network
- The Family Support Institute of BC
- Inclusion BC
- Vela Canada
- Norah Drake, CLBC's former Indigenous Practice Advisor
- Amber Rainshadow, CLBC Board member
- Indigenous individuals and families throughout BC
- CLBC staff throughout BC

Thank you, Kinana'skomitina'wa'w, Kinanskomitin, Maarsii, Miigwech

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1. CONTEXT

CLBC is committed to creating a culture of accountability to advance cultural safety and anti-racism by honouring and respecting Indigenous rights, protocols, and practices, and modelling anti-racism and anti-discrimination behaviours.

As part of the ongoing commitment to integrate the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA or *Declaration Act*) and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action* into CLBC's policies and practices, CLBC is seeking ways to support the integration of Indigenous rights within a person-centred framework while working towards more culturally safe service delivery.

CLBC contracted service providers are responsible for supporting and encouraging individuals to be as involved and have as much control over the planning process as they wish. Applying a person-centred approach will lead to better outcomes with the support of their families and/or support networks, communities, bands, and Nations.

To better support Indigenous individuals, CLBC is engaging with Indigenous communities, organizations, and service providers to gain an understanding of their colonial experiences and those of their families and/or support networks.

CLBC is working collaboratively with service providers, families, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, Indigenous organizations, and other key partners to provide culturally appropriate services. Where there are no Indigenous service providers available to deliver CLBC-funded services, CLBC is working with its network of contracted service providers to implement culturally safe practices with policy and practice guidance.

CLBC recognizes the importance of holism in Indigenous health and wellness practices. Holism requires service providers to work with Indigenous individuals, their families and/or support networks that looks beyond their disabilities to understand Indigenous perspectives on health and wellness. This includes understanding the balance between physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health, and the important roles of families and/or support networks, and Indigenous communities in individuals' lives.

2. PRACTICE

2.1 Purpose

This guide is intended to support service providers in applying the *Cultural Safety Policy* to ensure that all Indigenous individuals, their families and/or support networks experience culturally safe service delivery. Culturally safe practices are shaped by local Indigenous communities. CLBC

expects service providers to adhere to the guiding principles outlined in the *Cultural Safety Policy* in the delivery of their contracted services.

This guide is designed to be used together with the *Cultural Safety Policy*, and definitions in the policy and the *Glossary of Indigenous Terms* also apply to this guide. In both the policy and this guide, the term ‘individual’ is used to reference a person 19 years of age or older who is eligible for CLBC services as described in CLBC’s *Eligibility Policy* and complies with the *Community Living Authority Act*. The term ‘Indigenous peoples’ is used throughout this guide to refer to the Indigenous population as a whole.

Service providers are responsible for being familiar with:

- [B.C.’s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(DRIPA or Declaration Act\)](#)
- CLBC’s [Cultural Safety Policy](#)
- *Glossary of Indigenous Terms*
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)

2.2 Cultural Competency

Practicing cultural safety requires being knowledgeable about the colonial, sociopolitical, and historical events that trigger the health and social disparities that Indigenous peoples experience, and that perpetuate ongoing racism and unequal treatment. Achieving cultural safety involves a commitment to cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competency.

- **Cultural awareness** is the first step in the journey where someone is aware of their own culture and are able and willing to recognize cultural differences and accept other cultures.
- **Cultural sensitivity** is the reflection upon Indigenous peoples’ culture and their lived experiences, acknowledging cultural differences, and respecting Indigenous and cultural knowledge.
- **Cultural competency** involves integrating knowledge, skills, and attitudes about Indigenous individuals, including their social, cultural, and disability-related interests, strengths and needs, into respectful services.

Designing culturally safe service delivery requires a commitment of time and effort to establish meaningful, supportive, and trusting relationships with Indigenous peoples and their communities. CLBC encourages service providers to work collaboratively with Indigenous individuals, their families, and/or support networks, communities, bands, and Nations when developing culturally safe practices.

CLBC service providers are responsible for acknowledging and recognizing Indigenous peoples’ rights to health and well-being without discrimination. This can be done by providing full access to support and services in ways that reflect and are responsive to Indigenous worldviews and

conceptions of well-being and quality of life. Indigenous peoples' rights also include the right to discuss their holistic priorities, including culture, health, and wellness.

CLBC will regularly inform service providers about culturally safe practices through reputable information resources about Indigenous rights, protocols, and practices. These resources will be sourced from Indigenous peoples and communities, Indigenous health departments, and Indigenous-led organizations (e.g., First Nations Health Authority, Métis Nation of British Columbia, etc.).

2.3 Creating a Culturally Safe Space

To create a culturally safe environment, service providers are encouraged to:

- Identify and engage with Indigenous people and communities in their region to understand and develop a culturally safe space and practice
- Develop respectful and transparent relationships with Indigenous individuals, their families and/or support networks, and communities, and
- Maintain a safe space in their office that is culturally appropriate to meet with Indigenous individuals, families, and/or support networks.

2.3.1 Practice Tips for Creating a Welcoming, Safe Space

Service providers can create a welcoming and safe space by:

- Reflecting on their personal values, assumptions, privilege, and belief structures that inform their interactions with Indigenous individuals
- Displaying Indigenous artwork
- Using a traditional territorial acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples when meeting in-person and in email signatures
- Recognizing and treating Indigenous individuals as people first, not only as people requiring services
- Introducing themselves and explaining their role within the organization
- Establishing relationships with local Indigenous communities
- Explaining how services (e.g., Community Inclusion) work to ensure individuals along with their families and/or support networks understand how and when to access services
- Demonstrating a willingness to be collaborative and flexible in the way services are delivered by how it can accommodate their needs (e.g., a home sharing environment permits smudging)
- Recognizing and equalizing power imbalances in individual-service provider relationships by:
 - Acknowledging that individuals can make choices about how services are delivered
 - Expressing concerns about their services without negative consequences, and
 - Respecting changes in choices and/or goals over time.
- Taking the time to get to know individuals, their families, and/or support networks, and communities by:
 - Showing genuine interest
 - Listening respectfully

- Being attentive
 - Treating them with respect and empathy
 - Being aware of stereotypes, and
 - Acknowledging individuals' lived experiences.
- Being respectful by conveying kindness and humility
- Using open communication to allow individuals the time to express their feelings and talk about their experiences without fear of judgment
 - Asking questions and providing input and feedback
 - Respecting individuals' cultural beliefs, lifestyles, and
 - Respecting and safeguarding individuals' privacy, and confidentiality

CLBC service providers present information in a physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally safe manner that ensures individuals understand what they receive. Individuals are given the opportunity to:

- Review and process the information,
- Ask questions, and
- Have appropriate family members, support networks, or community members, etc. attend meetings to help communicate information, as needed.

An unsafe cultural environment is created by any action that diminishes, demeans and/or disempowers an Indigenous individual's cultural identity and well-being. Examples of an unsafe cultural environment may include racist and/or discriminatory remarks or being treated badly, unfairly, or unequally because of race, culture, or language.

2.4 Promoting, Maintaining, and Sustaining Connections

To support Indigenous individuals, service providers are encouraged to:

- Learn about the significant impact of colonialism on Indigenous health and wellness, and about ways to rebuild the intergenerational connections that were disrupted by colonialism
- Promote access to and use of traditional medicines and healing practices (if desired), including physical, social, mental, spiritual, and economic support to meet the individual's health and wellness goals
- Respect Indigenous individuals' choices and right to use holistic treatments, such as ceremonies, traditional medicines, healing practices, and protocols provided by Indigenous community members
- Work with Indigenous individuals and communities to reconnect and incorporate Indigenous practices, ceremonies, and supports into the individual's service plan, if requested, and
- Create lasting, meaningful, and respectful relationships with Indigenous individuals, their families and/or support networks.

2.5 Culturally Safe Complaint Resolution Process

In the past, many Indigenous peoples have not had access to culturally appropriate outlets (e.g., a culturally safe complaints resolution process) to submit concerns or complaints. This has resulted in being ignored and/or subjected to Indigenous-specific racism and further traumatization.

Indigenous individuals, their families and/or support networks need a process to share their concerns in an accessible, confidential, and culturally safe manner without fear of retribution or discrimination. Service providers can create a culturally safe complaint process by:

- Providing a culturally safe space to share their experience(s) and collect information about the impact of an incident or concern
- Confirming that the complaint, incident, or concern will be kept confidential
- Outlining the process and advising that they can involve other people in their network to support them throughout the process
- Listening respectfully to the concern, incident, or complaint
- Providing support throughout the process
- Responding promptly and fairly to their concerns
- Maintaining regular contact about the status of their complaint or concern
- Respecting the rights of those involved (e.g., the individuals, families, etc.), and
- Respecting cultural protocols and practices and learning from experience to improve the quality of services.

In a culturally safe way, service providers are encouraged to develop and sustain ongoing, respectful communication with Indigenous peoples and communities. This will lead to a better understanding of how individuals experience the services they are accessing, and to use their feedback to identify opportunities for improvement.

2.6 Self-Awareness

To nurture strong relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities, service providers are encouraged to support their employees and contractors to develop self-awareness about their:

- Privilege (i.e., unearned social advantages, favours, and benefits afforded to non-racialized people in comparison to racialized groups), and
- Biases by considering their personal triggers or learned experiences that contribute to the creation of their biases about other people's or group's characteristics, skills, and/or competencies.

A person's privilege and biases influence how one thinks and acts, reinforcing negative stereotypes and leading to poor judgments. Through increased self-awareness, these can be actively managed, mitigated, and avoided.

To improve self-awareness, service providers are encouraged to examine their personal and organization's values, opinions, and beliefs in order to determine whether they align with and strengthen cultural safety.

- If, for example, a person finds themselves uncomfortable in an unfamiliar situation and they are uncertain as to how to act or respond, who in the organization can they consult with for advice on appropriate responses/behaviour? What resources are available to support their learning?
- Also, how can they be supported to examine their discomfort, and to consider learning more about Indigenous culture, issues, and communities.

This approach will lead to being more inclusive and adept at facilitating more respectful and trusting relationships with Indigenous individuals.

2.7 Culturally Responsive Programming

Culturally responsive programming uses inclusive language and communication to ensure that Indigenous individuals, families, and/or support networks' views and experiences are reflected in the design and implementation of services. Culturally responsive programming is adapted over time to improve the lives of Indigenous individuals.

To develop a stronger understanding of Indigenous health and wellness needs, concerns, and priorities, service providers are encouraged to consult with CLBC's Indigenous Relations team, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, Indigenous organizations, and other key partners.

Service providers are also encouraged to:

- Participate in training offered online and in-person (e.g., the Indigenous Canada course through the University of Alberta)
- Work with Indigenous individuals, families and/or their support networks, and communities and align programming to match individuals' goals
- Consult CLBC's Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers and Healers to learn more about Indigenous health and wellness needs, and
- Meet with Indigenous service providers to learn about examples of current or past successful programming.

2.8 Applying a Strength-based Approach

Through cultural safety education and training, service providers can increase their knowledge about Indigenous rights and the value of applying a strengths-based approach to supporting Indigenous individuals. A strength-based approach views the individual holistically, exploring their abilities, uniqueness, and circumstances. It allows the individual to use their strengths to determine how they would like to develop and set goals with the support of their families and/or support networks, service providers, and communities.

Service providers can support individuals with community-led strategies, which value the knowledge, capacity, and skills of Indigenous peoples and communities. This can be accomplished by working with Indigenous individuals to identify personal and community strengths and assets

(e.g., extended family and kinship, cultural activities, community organizations and events, etc.) and build resilience despite significant hardships or trauma.

Service providers are encouraged to work with Indigenous individuals, their families and/or support networks to incorporate a holistic wellness, person-centered, and strength-based approach. By doing so, service providers respect an individual's right to access cultural ceremonies, practices, and supports (e.g., traditional healing practices and ceremonies, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, etc.).

2.9 Applying an Indigenous Trauma-Informed and Responsive Approach

Service providers are encouraged to acknowledge the widespread systemic Indigenous-specific racism, stereotyping, and discrimination against Indigenous peoples and communities that result in negative or traumatic experiences. Service providers can promote an Indigenous trauma-informed and responsive approach by:

- Focusing on minimizing the potential for harm and re-traumatization
- Addressing discrimination by confronting disrespectful, unethical, and/or racist remarks and stereotypes
- Promoting equitable outcomes and opportunities for all Indigenous individuals
- Ensuring Indigenous individuals' physical, social, and emotional safety, especially when gathering information about social determinants of health (i.e., personal, social, economic, and environmental) during planning, and
- Promoting positive interactions between individuals, their families, and/or support networks, Indigenous community members, and service provider staff.

2.10 Promoting Indigeneity

Indigeneity refers to the importance of an Indigenous individual's connection to their origin community and kinship ties (i.e., from where they descend) which is integral to one's Indigenous identity. Indigeneity is woven through history and diverse experiences, reminding us of the impacts of colonial policies and practices that have historically worked to try to erase Indigenous identities.

By looking beyond the colonial experience, service providers can improve their Indigenous knowledge by learning:

- What wellness and quality of life means from an Indigenous perspective by speaking with Indigenous individuals, families, organizations, and communities, and
- The factors that may impact the Indigenous individual's well-being both positively (e.g., smudging, traditional medicines, sweat lodge, spirituality, and ceremony), and negatively (e.g., intergenerational trauma, abuse, violence, neglect, poverty, education and/or housing deficits).

2.11 Coordinated Service Approach

Since Indigenous people experience a disproportionately higher degree and unique form of racism and discrimination, applying a coordinated service approach will support individuals to navigate these barriers to achieve inclusion in community and a positive quality of life.

A coordinated service approach involves:

- Learning about and being familiar with individuals' philosophies and approaches to their health and wellness
- Supporting individuals to integrate culture and Indigenous service approaches in their person-centred service plans
- Building trusting relationships and establishing common goals with Indigenous service providers (e.g., Friendship Centres) to better support individuals
- Recognizing and respecting the diversity of Indigenous individuals, bands, and Nations
- Embracing and supporting individuals holistically by addressing their mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs, and
- Engaging Elders, Indigenous family members, and communities to help design an individual's service.

Service providers are responsible for being aware of and knowledgeable about Indigenous rights, protocols, and practices. For example, Elders and Knowledge Keepers provide valuable Indigenous knowledge, expertise, and healing practices (e.g., herbal medicines and other remedies; psychological and spiritual ceremonies, counselling, and wisdom) which are key to promoting Indigenous individuals' well-being and quality of life. Working collaboratively and respectfully with Elders and Knowledge Keepers will be invaluable in developing a service provider's capacity to provide culturally safe support.

2.12 How to Apply the Two-Eyed Seeing Guiding Principle

Service providers are encouraged to apply the principle of Two-Eyed Seeing when working with Indigenous individuals. Two-Eyed Seeing is about being mindful or open to alternative ways of knowing and considering multiple perspectives when delivering services. Two-Eyed Seeing is not the melding of two minds of thought but valuing the differences of worldviews.

Service providers are encouraged to:

- Look beyond their own worldviews to consider Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing and appreciating multiple perspectives
- Consider Indigenous perspectives and knowledge and engage with Indigenous families and/or support networks and community members to:
 - Develop meaningful relationships, and
 - Seek ways to promote an equal power balance, and
- Develop service plans that reflect Indigenous beliefs and practices and support Indigenous rights.

3. NEXT STEPS

As stated in the acknowledgement section of this guide, the *Cultural Safety Policy* represents a first step in a journey to support CLBC and its network of service providers to advance reconciliation. CLBC does not expect that all services will immediately be transformed following the implementation of the policy and supporting practice guidance. The policy is aspirational in nature, outlining the expectation that service providers join CLBC in its commitment and journey to create culturally safe services.

If you have questions or concerns, service providers are encouraged to consult with CLBC's Indigenous Relations team by emailing CLBCIndigenousCulturalSafety@gov.bc.ca or contacting your local CLBC office.