

Policy Number IR9.010	Policy Section Indigenous Relations	Effective: September 27, 2022
Title: Cultural Safety Policy		Executive Sponsor: Executive Director, Indigenous Relations Chief Executive Officer

Summary

This policy explains what cultural safety means at CLBC.

It describes what CLBC staff can do to support Indigenous individuals and their families when they are receiving CLBC-funded services.

It suggests ways of working with Indigenous individuals and their families that are inclusive, and emotionally, physically, socially, and spiritually safe.

The policy uses the same language found in legislation that supports the rights of Indigenous peoples in B.C.

The policy also says that cultural safety needs to be a part of person-centred planning and can include people that Indigenous individuals choose.

It also has a list of resources for more information.

1. PURPOSE

This policy describes Community Living British Columbia's (CLBC) cultural safety principles and practices that guide how CLBC staff and service providers engage, support, monitor, and plan with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals, their families and/or support networks, and communities. It promotes inclusion, anti-racism, equity, reconciliation, and flexible service delivery for Indigenous individuals CLBC serves.

This policy supports the implementation of B.C.'s *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA or the Declaration Act) and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action*.

This policy applies to CLBC staff and service providers contracted to deliver services to Indigenous individuals CLBC supports. CLBC staff should review this policy together with the *Glossary of Indigenous Terms* and the *Cultural Safety Practice Guide for CLBC Staff*.

2. DEFINITIONS

Adult: A person 19 years of age or older.

Policy Framework: An intersectional body of documentation that directs, supports, informs, and/or describes the work of CLBC. The framework consists of policies, procedures, practice guidance, standards, agreements, arrangements, memorandums of understanding, and language aligned across the organization. There are nine distinct policy areas that make up the Policy Framework: Governance, Supports and Services, Finance, Indigenous Relations, Information and Technology, People and Culture, Quality Assurance, Strategic Initiatives, and Communications.

Cultural Awareness: The ability and willingness to objectively examine the values, beliefs, traditions, and perceptions within our own and others' cultures. At the most basic level, it is the ability to walk in someone else's shoes and be able to understand their cultural origins.

Cultural Competency: The integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to improve quality of services thereby producing better outcomes.

Cultural Safety: An outcome of respectful engagement based on recognition of the power imbalances inherent to service systems, and the work to address these imbalances. A culturally safe environment for Indigenous peoples is one that is physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually safe without challenge, ignorance, or denial of an individual's identity. Practicing cultural safety requires having knowledge of the colonial, sociopolitical, and historical events that trigger disparities encountered by Indigenous peoples and perpetuate and maintain ongoing racism and unequal treatment.

Cultural Sensitivity: Refers to reflecting on Indigenous peoples' cultural background and experiences that go beyond acknowledging cultural differences to respecting Indigenous knowledge and being sensitive to customs that can also be uniquely individual.

Holism: A world view in which cultural beliefs, norms, spirituality, and values are not separated from human social life. Culture and identity are tightly connected to territory, kinship, community, ceremony, and nation.

Individual: A person 19 years of age or older who is eligible for CLBC services, as described in the *Eligibility Policy*.

Quality of Life: A multidimensional framework composed of core domains influenced by personal characteristics and environmental factors. These core domains fall under three broad areas of independence, social participation and well-being and are the same for all people, although they may vary individually or culturally in relative value and importance. Assessment

of quality of life domains is based on culturally sensitive indicators, and generally takes into account general health, well-being, and happiness.

Self-determination: The process by which an individual, people or nation makes decisions to determine their own future. Self-determination is the process by which an individual makes choices and controls their own life and is also the process by which a people determine their own identity, nation, or statehood to form its own allegiances and government.

Service Provider: A person or organization under contract with CLBC, including their employees, contractors, sub-contractors, and volunteers to deliver supports and services to individuals, families and/or support networks. This term is also utilized in situations where a contract has not yet been issued, such as during an approval or procurement process.

Two-Eyed Seeing (*Etuaptmumk*): A guiding principle developed by Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall that recognizes that the likelihood of better outcomes is greater if there is collaboration between two or more perspectives.

3. POLICY

Operational Context

3.1 CLBC is committed to pursuing reconciliation by incorporating aspects of key Indigenous-related legislation (e.g., *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* or DRIPA) into its policies and practices and addressing the long-standing inequities Indigenous peoples' experience. The DRIPA emphasizes Indigenous peoples' rights to live in dignity, to maintain and strengthen Indigenous institutions, cultures, and traditions, and to pursue self-determined development that aligns with Indigenous peoples' needs and aspirations. CLBC recognizes that terminology is ever evolving and understands that systemic and personal change is a process.

3.2 CLBC is committed to developing meaningful relationships with Indigenous individuals, their families, and/or support networks that are based on mutual respect and transparency. CLBC staff and service providers are expected to engage with, learn from, and celebrate with Indigenous peoples and communities to support and promote Indigenous healing, decolonization, and reconciliation.

3.3 CLBC staff are supported to reflect on their privilege and biases to avoid making assumptions that can result in harmful and traumatic experiences for Indigenous individuals, jeopardizing CLBC's relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities.

3.4 The incorporation of Indigenous knowledge, worldviews, lived experiences, values, ancestral wisdom, research tools, and community involvement is essential to the development, design, and delivery of CLBC supports and services.

Where possible and appropriate, CLBC engages Indigenous communities to identify needs and priorities to improve policy and practice. Working within legislative obligations, CLBC will adapt policies and practices to create positive outcomes for Indigenous individuals CLBC serves

while supporting government efforts to increase access to Indigenous healing practices, including ceremonies that are recognized by Indigenous peoples and communities.

3.5 CLBC expects and supports contracted agencies to provide services in ways that are culturally safe and advance reconciliation.

Guiding Principles

3.6 Cultural safety is an outcome of respectful engagement based on recognition of the power imbalances inherent in government and other systems, and the work to address these imbalances. A culturally safe environment for Indigenous peoples is one that is physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually safe without challenge, ignorance, or denial of an individual's identity.

The following guiding principles promote positive and productive relationships and practices to improve Indigenous peoples' quality of life and those of their families and/or support networks.

3.6.1 Culturally Responsive Programming is the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge, research tools, lived experience, ancestral wisdom, and community involvement throughout the research and design process. It acknowledges that the general way of "doing business" may not be appropriate for Indigenous peoples and that the path to understanding this is as important as the service or program design itself. This includes two aspects:

- Two-Eyed Seeing where we are including Indigenous specific research and practices where they exist; and
- Ensuring Indigenous peoples inform our work, whether when planning with individuals or building innovative programs or service offerings.

3.6.2 Indigenous Anti-Racism involves taking action to create conditions of greater inclusion, equality, and justice. It is the practice of respectfully identifying, challenging, preventing, and eliminating racist ideologies, and changing the values, structures, policies, programs, practices, and behaviours that perpetuate racism. In this context, it also includes a commitment to self-awareness and developing an understanding of personal power and privilege because of the positions we hold.

3.6.3 Indigenous Trauma Informed and Responsive Approach centers on the individual's holistic wellness as part of the collective community, the natural world, spirit world, and ancestors. An Indigenous trauma informed and responsive approach recognizes the social and historical impacts that have disrupted Indigenous life, and naturally encompasses strategies of anti-oppression, non-interference, and individual self-determination. It shifts the question from "what is wrong with you" to "what has happened to you," moving beyond labelling and pathologizing (e.g., medical models), and focuses on understanding and responding to the larger structural and systemic issues impacting individuals' daily lives.

3.6.4 Promoting, Maintaining and Sustaining Connections, specifically community and natural connections, is important in Indigenous individuals' lives. Kinship ties and having natural connections are integral to one's identity, sense of self, and contribute to the quality of an individual's supports and services. Through family and community connections, individuals are

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connected to the culture, language, land, and water from which they originated. CLBC also recognizes the prominent place that individuals hold in their family and within the community social structure or fabric of the community.

3.6.5 Person-Centred Approach recognizes that Indigenous individuals' views and lived experiences can empower them to take charge of their lives leading to better outcomes. A person-centred approach ensures that planning and service delivery respond to the natural rhythm of an individual's life within the contexts of their communities and networks. This principle aligns with the planning approach described in the *Support and Planning Policy*.

3.6.6 Promoting a Coordinated Service Approach with respect to planning with Indigenous people encourages the inclusion of funded Indigenous supports and services both on Nation and in the urban environment. It also recognizes the challenges individuals face in navigating parallel systems of care.

Core Elements of Cultural Safety Practices

3.7 There are several core elements that shape cultural safety best practices:

- i. Carefully consider who and how they should be engaged, and what cultural and community protocols should be respected.
- ii. Develop an understanding of Indigenous traditional approaches and cultural systems that are related to the context within which one is working.
- iii. Honour Indigenous kinship systems by recognizing the region's culture and traditions in which you are practicing. Do this by learning about the region in which you work.
- iv. Recognize the importance of family-centred practices and collaborate with parents and other caregivers (such as grandparents, 'aunties,' older siblings, cousins, etc.). These practices must be rooted in Indigenous concepts of family and kinship. Do this by asking respectful questions.
- v. Explore familial, cultural, and community connections where they are absent and encourage individuals to consider who may be important in their lives as they age.
- vi. Engage with Elders to inform ongoing practice through local relationships to learn about holistic practices appropriate to planning and service delivery approaches (such as the CLBC Elders Council).
- vii. Where natural supports are absent, create and enhance services and supports that provide opportunities to connect individuals to local and land-based activities (such as hunting, trapping, and harvesting), and to promote positive cultural identity and resiliency. Do this through engaging with their community if local, or with a local Indigenous agency.
- viii. Adopt trauma informed and responsive practices, including the application of harm reduction approaches in planning and service delivery. Four key principles that guide trauma informed practice include:
 - a. Trauma awareness
 - b. Emphasis on safety and trustworthiness
 - c. Strength-based and skill building

- d. Opportunities for choice, collaboration, and connection.
- ix. Recognize your own limitations, including the knowledge, experience, orientation, and understanding needed to practice meaningfully and appropriately, and commit to learning over time.

4. REFERENCES

Conventions and Legislation

[B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#)

[B.C. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Cultural Safety and Humility Standard](#)

[B.C. Tripartite Framework Agreement on First Nations Health Governance](#)

[Constitution Act, 1982](#)

[Indian Act](#)

[Métis Nation Relationship Accord](#)

[Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples](#)

[The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

[The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities](#)

CLBC Policy

Cultural Safety Practice Guide

[Cultural Safety CLBC Service Provider Guide](#)

Honourarium Policy

Honourarium Procedures

[Support and Planning Policy](#)

Tools for CLBC Staff

Acknowledging Traditional Territories of Indigenous Peoples Guide for CLBC Staff

Built Space Protocols

Elders' Advisory Guide

[Glossary of Indigenous Terms](#)

Guide to Working with Indigenous Families

Honourarium Letter

[Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)

Indigenous Advisory Committee Way Forward Plan

[In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health](#)

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)