



Workplace Diversity Policy

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Approved By	MHF Board
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Purpose

Mental Health Foundation ACT (MHF) recognises, respects and values the diversity of its staff, consumers and the community in which it operates.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Board members, staff, students, volunteers and visitors of MHF to recognise, value and respect diversity.

Definitions

CaLD – Cultural and Linguistic Diversity – People who are from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, including Indigenous communities, as demonstrated through country of birth, language other than English being spoken at home, and English language proficiency.

Disability – is an intellectual, psycho-social, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of these.

Discrimination - when someone, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, gender, pregnancy or marital status, age, disability, religion, sexual preference or other characteristic specified under anti-discrimination or human rights legislation.

Diversity – is the term used to describe 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.

Inclusive language – is free of bias, discrimination and avoids stereotyping and mistaken assumptions about people on the basis of their, sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, breast feeding, sexual orientation, gender history, health status, race, nationality, colour or ethnic origin, age, religious or political conviction, impairment or disability, socio-economic status, choice of drug and/or drug dependence, family responsibility or family status.

Inclusion means to embrace and value all people, irrespective of their diversity and diverse characteristics. It is about providing equity and opportunities and not permitting discrimination or intolerance.

Unlawful discrimination occurs when one person takes adverse action against another person because of the following attributes of the latter person:

- race
- colour
- sex
- sexual orientation
- breastfeeding
- gender identity
- intersex status
- age
- physical or mental disability
- marital status
- family or carer’s responsibilities
- pregnancy
- religion
- political opinion
- national extraction or
- social origin

Policy

The MHF will continue to address the main drivers of social inclusion to effectively develop and manage an increasingly diverse workforce. MHF will uphold principles of self-determination; participation in decision making and will be inclusive of the following principles:

1. Implement a practice that embraces respect for all individuals and creates accessible services.

- Manage individuals by recognising individual differences, contributions and needs in the workplace.
- Provide services to people irrespective of race, religion, politics, age, disability, understanding of English, gender and sexuality.
- Plan, design and deliver culturally responsive services.
- Create a 'one point of entry' and 'continuity of care' philosophy and practice.
- Always strive to improve services.

2. Increase social participation by building community

- Services at all times will support people to build skills, networks and lifestyle choices to enable greater community participation to have the life they want.
- Support strong and diverse communities free from discrimination, violence and abuse.
- To actively contribute to community reference groups, networks, events and celebrations.

3. Develop relationships of trust and cooperation with CaLD and Indigenous communities.

- Acknowledge, respect and adhere to the cultural protocols practiced by individual communities.
- Develop communication strategies that are relevant to individual communities.

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- Base all interactions on an understanding of and respect for the importance that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders place on relationships between people.

4. Promote equal employment opportunity and recognise the benefits of diversity

- The concept of workplace diversity includes the principle of equal employment opportunity.
- A diverse workforce encompassing different backgrounds and perspectives gives MHF a broader range of ideas and insights.
- A diverse workplace that reflects the diverse needs of the community will understand its client better, which leads to improved services.

5. Implement strategies for effective workplace diversity

- Workplace diversity principles should underpin all aspects of MHF employment:
 - Planning
 - Selection and recruitment
 - Personal review and development
 - Learning and development
 - Workplace health and safety
 - Workplace relations
- A workplace free from harassment and bullying.

Responsibility of MHF staff

- All MHF staff shall assess their own prejudices to ensure that all participants receive the highest standard of care.
- Actively work to reduce participant disadvantage, increase social, civic and economic participation for participants and given them a greater voice with greater responsibility.
- To speak up and raise conduct or behaviour that is not consistent with this or any other MHF policy.

MHF Leadership Team

In addition, managers will ensure that:

- social inclusion and workplace diversity principles are integrated with and underpin all aspects of their work.
- the workplace is harassment free and ensure this policy is implemented.

References

ACT Government	<i>Discrimination Act 1991</i>
Australian Human Rights Commission	<i>Diversity Strategy</i>
Commonwealth Government	<i>Age Discrimination Act 2004</i>
	<i>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986</i>
	<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>
	<i>Fair Work Act 2009</i>
	<i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i>
	<i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i>
Lifeline Australia	<i>Diversity Policy</i>
Mission Australia	<i>Diversity and Inclusion Policy</i>
Wesley Mission	<i>Social Inclusion and Workplace Diversity Policy</i>

Distribution and location list	
Electronic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SharePoint.../Admin /Admin /Library and reference material /Policies and Procedures/ Human Resource Management.
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Document History				
Author	Version	Amendment	Owner	Date of Effect
Corporate Services Manager	1.0	Document Created	MHF Board	April 2017
Corporate Services Manager	2.0	Document reviewed for currency. Expanded definition for CALD; included definition for Disability; Diversity; Inclusive Language; and Unlawful discrimination.	MHF Board	January 2021
Corporate Services Manager	3.0	Change template to include new logo and font. Expanded definition of Diversity; and included definition for Inclusion. Expanded list of attributes relating to discrimination, to include those in the <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> : breastfeeding; gender identify; intersex status; and changed psychosocial to mental disability. Included specific separate information about the responsibility of MHF staff and leadership team.	MHF Board	April 2023