

Kawa Whakaruruhau: Cultural Safety

Cultural Safety has its origins in the field nursing education. The concept originated at a nursing leadership hui in 1989 after concerns were raised by Māori nursing students about the safety of Māori students in monocultural nursing schools and of Māori intellectual property when taught by tauīwi; it was further theorised and developed by Irihapeti Ramsden and the Nursing Council of New Zealand.

Initially the educational focus was on teaching cultural safety for Māori to health professionals in the New Zealand Health Service; but because the principles of cultural safety have been recognised as relevant to all cultures their application has been broadened accordingly.

Definitions:

In a relationship where you have institutional power, cultural safety is the moment of trust that occurs leading the client/patient/customer to not needing to protect their difference from you. [You don't have to have information about the difference for you to be judged safe with the client/patient/customer.]

Drawn from Ramsden, 2002

The objectives are to:

1. enable student nurses and midwives to examine their own reality and the attitudes they bring to each new person they encounter in their practice
2. to educate student nurses and midwives to be open-minded and flexible in their attitudes toward people from differing cultures, to whom they offer and deliver service
3. to education student nurses and midwives not to blame the victims of historical and social processes for their current plight
4. To produce a workforce of well-educated, self-aware registered nurses and midwives who are culturally safe to practice

The Cultural Safety process = Sensitivity + Self-Awareness → Safety

Ramsden, 1992, p 22

Culturally 'unsafe' practice has been defined as: "Any actions which diminish, demean or disempower the cultural identity and wellbeing of an individual"... Culturally safe practice requires an understanding of the concepts of culture and racism generally and their own cultural values and beliefs in particular, in order to avoid cultural imposition.

Cooney, 1994

References and further information:

- Cooney, Catherine. (1994) A comparative analysis of transcultural nursing and cultural safety In *Nursing Praxis in New Zealand*. March, pp 6-12
- Ramsden, Irihapeti (1992) Teaching cultural safety In *NZ Nursing Journal*. June, pp 21-23.
- Ramsden, Irihapeti (2002) *Cultural Safety and Nursing Education in Aotearoa and Te Wai Pounamu*. Unpublished thesis. Victoria University of Wellington.
- Way, Karena (1994) *Cultural safety – the outcome not the intentions*. Tamaki-makaurau: Project Waitangi.