

## **Statement of commitment to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Populations**

Therapy Pro celebrates Australia's multicultural society and has a strong commitment to support Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) persons in a culturally safe and respectful way, to enable people from CALD backgrounds to make meaningful and productive contributions to Australian society.

Therapy Pro intrinsically believes that high-quality therapeutic services are required by all members of our society, to meet their individual needs and uphold their individual preferences which are based on many factors, including individual cultural beliefs.

The consequences of culturally inappropriate therapeutic services can include psychological distress and unnecessary suffering for the person, family, carers and community. As Australia's cultural diversity increases, cultural misunderstandings resulting in the provision of inappropriate therapeutic services to people from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds has the potential to grow.

Cultural safety, respect and sensitivity to people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and their community ties, is integral to the delivery of quality therapeutic services. Whilst cultural practices are not the sole determinants of patient preferences there may be significant individual differences, within and across communities, that can only be understood from a cultural safety approach by our therapeutic staff.

The needs of children, youth, persons with disabilities, including cognitive impairments, and older people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and new and emerging communities, additionally raise broad equity and access issues.

The health implications associated with reduced client engagement in accessing therapeutic services is a significant issue relative to client outcomes and progress on goals. Therapy Pro supports its staff to be competent, sensitive and safe relative to a client's cultural presentation.

All health professionals must have a proactive engagement in culturally and linguistically diverse issues, and therefore need a level of cultural competence, sensitivity and safety when providing therapeutic services to people from different cultural backgrounds, and the knowledge of when and how to consult further cultural expertise when required.

## Therapy Pro supports:

- adoption of initiatives that build the cultural awareness and cultural competence, sensitivity, and safety by the broad health care workforce;
- a commitment by governments to education and training that builds the cultural competence, sensitivity and safety of Australia's health workforce through undergraduate, postgraduate, vocational and continuing professional education;
- flexibility in models of therapeutic services to accommodate the individual preferences of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- training, funding and resourcing of cultural liaison officers with the necessary skills, experience and knowledge;
- resourcing and actively utilising community consultation mechanisms to ensure local services develop a clear understanding of the needs of the communities they serve and develop appropriate strategies to meet these needs;
- availability of and support for qualified and trained translators and medical/allied health interpreters who can ensure effective, efficient and reliable communication between allied health professionals and clients, their families and carers, particularly within the context of disability services;
- development of protocols for health professionals to guide the use of interpreting and translation services, including addressing the issue of people not feeling able to honestly relay information due to their own cultural beliefs;
- the provision of comprehensive health information in a range of community languages, including information that specifically addresses concerns communities have about particular health issues such as privacy and confidentiality; and
- specifically targeted health promotion programs to develop community capacity to access appropriate care when required.