

Diversity and Inclusion



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System: Governance

Responsible Person/s:

Footsteps Community Services (FCS) Board
 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
 General Manager (GM)
 Management Team
 All FCS' Employees, subcontractors, consultants, volunteers and clients

Purpose:

This policy aims to support and promote an inclusive environment that recognises, respects, and values the individual differences of all people engaged with our services including clients, employees and volunteers. These individual differences can include but are not limited to:

- Gender and age.
- Language, ethnicity and cultural background.
- Disability.
- Sexual orientation.
- Religious beliefs.
- Family responsibilities.

Scope:

This policy applies to all FCS employees, clients, subcontractors, consultants, and volunteers.

Definition:

CALD: Culturally and linguistically diverse people from CALD backgrounds speak a language other than English, they may practice cultural activities and have specific spiritual needs.

Policy Statement:

When supporting clients, being culturally responsive is an important part of providing person-centered services. Person centeredness means the supports are “person focused” and culturally responsive meaning FCS is able to interpret, define and respond to the individual and cultural needs of each participant. The initial intake and continuous reviews will provide key to understand an individual, their culture, beliefs, and views (*see the Identifying and responding to clients’ needs policy*).

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Promoting Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are promoted by:

- Filling employment openings based on merit.
- Fostering an inclusive environment respectful of all cultural backgrounds and beliefs.
- Fostering a workplace culture that is inclusive and embraces individual differences.
- Fostering a physical and cultural environment that encourages engagement and participation.
- Consulting clients, carers, family members, community groups, and other organisations on the needs of individuals.
- Supporting and encouraging each client to be part of the community and creating opportunities to socialize and build enduring relationships within their local communities.
- Ensuring clients have access to the same facilities and services as the rest of the community.
- Providing services in a way that is culturally responsive.

Supporting Participants from CALD Backgrounds

When providing services to participants from CALD backgrounds, we will:

- Where possible, recruit/match workers with the same background as the participant.
- Ensure all workers supporting the participant are trained in or are aware of how to provide services in a culturally sensitive way.

Inclusive Services

- FCS develops, implements, and reviews services that progressively build opportunities for inclusion into the local community.
- FCS promotes the use of social networks and informal supports for clients.
- FCS promotes clients' usage of local or alternative community services.
- FCS is to ensure client satisfaction including integration and community participation with their chosen community:
 - Services are provided in a way that facilitates the integration and participation of clients with other members of the community.
 - Services and strategies are designed to make the greatest possible use of community facilities and services.
 - Employees and volunteers are recruited based on their own involvement and connection with the wider community, amongst other attributes.
 - When and if possible, other members of the community are utilised for clients to be part of community activities.
 - FCS collaborates with other community groups, and their members, to facilitate clients' inclusion.
 - FCS avoids large or exclusive group activities for clients when the likely outcome will be to reinforce stigma and/or exclusion.
 - FCS always provides choice regarding services available.

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- Services are designed and delivered with clients.
- Duty of care, dignity of risks and client's choice and control are always considered when designing and delivering services.

Supporting Clients and Employees Who Identify as but not limited to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual (LGBTQI+)

FCS recognises that LGBTQI+ people are a diverse group that is comprised of a variety of sexual orientations and gender identities. People with diverse gender and/or sexual identities may be more vulnerable to abuse, isolation, mental health conditions and other problems associated with discrimination. FCS understands this and is committed to providing both inclusive services and work environment. To support clients and employees who identify as LGBTQI, plus FCS will:

- Foster an environment where clients and employees feel safe to express and develop their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.
- Acknowledge that, as with all other clients and employees, LGBTQI+ people have the right to voice their views on issues that affect them.
- Avoid assuming gender and sexual orientation.
- Use inclusive and respectful language when speaking to or about LGBTQI+ individuals.
- Include information about LGBTQI+ issues during onboarding and employees' training.
- Identify and challenge any discriminatory beliefs if they are present.
- Provide resources that help clients understand their identity.
- Where appropriate, refer clients to relevant LGBTQI+ support services if required (e.g. Local social spaces).
- Ensure that FCS observes appropriate levels of confidentiality regarding clients and employees' information, including information about their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.
- Respect clients and employees' right to not to disclose their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Equity:

- FCS shall accept and value every employee, client, and carers regardless of gender or ability.
- FCS will ensure all employees are aware of the way in which they treat individual clients and carers regarding language, attitudes, assumption, and expectations.
- All clients will be encouraged, empowered, and supported to try a broad variety of activities.

Cultural Relevance/Anti-Bias:

- FCS shall accept and value every employee, client and carer regardless of race, cultural background, religion, or sexual preferences.

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- FCS will make all aware of the specific cultures represented in its workforce and clientele.
- All FCS employees will be provided with appropriate training and resources to ensure they are able to work in culturally appropriate and inclusive ways.
- No discrimination will be made against any client or employee due to their culture, race, or sexual preference.
- Employees will be non-judgmental towards the clients and respect any differences.
- Employees are encouraged to share knowledge of their own cultures with other employees, carers, and clients and to incorporate this into service delivery.
- At FCS, all will make themselves aware of any issues or behaviour, which may be offensive to the various cultures we support.
- Clients will be encouraged to explore and share a range of cultural activities and experiences in an environment free from racial prejudice and harassment.
- Cultural awareness should be integrated throughout all activities in the services and reflect an attitude of respect and positive appreciation for the differences in society.

Use of Interpreters and Adapted Communication:

- FCS recognises that some clients might need individualised support to enhance communication and the organisation will always endeavor to support clients to access those services.
- FCS will always endeavor to utilise multiple adapted communication channels to ensure clients have access and receive information in a format which is suitable, fosters autonomy and supports informed decision making.
- Within ability and resources, FCS will endeavor to provide training to employees to foster communication and the use of technology to do so.

With respect to resources available, FCS will support clients to access interpreter services or when feasible to be supported by employees with a shared language and cultural background. When not fulfilled internally, those needs will be met through obtaining the assistance of a person from an external translation and interpreting service, such as Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) National.

FCS must ensure that all key risks relating to interpreting and translating services are managed. This includes risks relating to:

- Conflicts of interest.
- Loss of objectivity.
- Privacy breaches.

In addition, when an interpreter is required, FCS will record:

- The name and contact information of the interpreter.
- Situations and service contexts when the interpreter is required.
- Whether any documents need to be translated.

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- How the interpreter will be engaged (e.g. Face-to-face, telephone).

Phone interpreter services may also be used for shorter and less complex discussions. It is acceptable to use any reputable interpreting and translation service. However, it is important to note that there is limited providers who are NDIS registered.

Related Documents:

Identifying and responding to clients' needs policy.

Scheduled Review Date:

This policy will be reviewed as required, or within no later than five (5) years from the date of authorisation.

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