

Supporting culturally reflective practice

LEADERS SERIES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this resource may contain images, audio or names of people who have passed away.

Module 3: Being uncomfortable

Welcome to the third module of **Emerging Minds'** series for leaders focusing on culturally reflective practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities. In this module, we will talk about times when we may feel uncomfortable engaging with families from a culture different to our own.

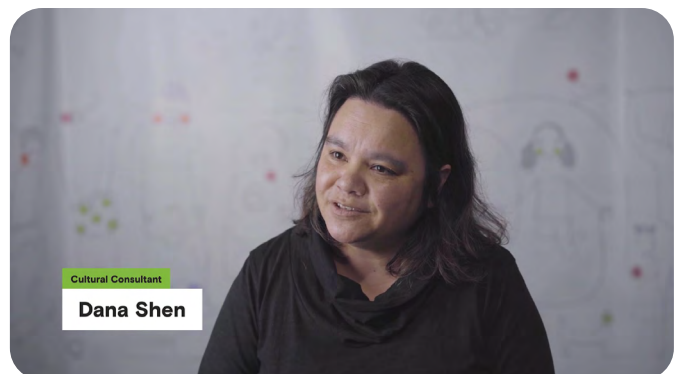
When we are working with families from a different culture to our own, there may be times when it feels uncomfortable. This could be due to language barriers, different ways being or differences in how we express ourselves.

While you should always feel safe in your practice, it's important to remember that occasional feelings of discomfort are both normal and OK. However, it is also important to be aware of your discomfort and to understand what may be triggering your responses.

The more you interact and build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, the more comfortable you will be with any differences that arise. Cultural competency starts by accepting our experiences of difference – and the discomfort that comes with them – in order to learn something new.¹ What you learn in this process will enrich your ability to connect with all families.



Watch the following video (4 minutes, 1 second) in which cultural consultant Dana Shen explores discomfort in practice.



Reflective questions

- Why do you think it is important to understand emotional responses?
- In what ways might certain responses get in the way of the relationship you are building with the children or families you are engaging with?

Strategies to support learning

Consider a past or current experience of being uncomfortable. How can you:

- explore these reactions with your team, being patient with the feelings of not understanding and with the discomfort of not knowing?
- listen deeply, look for direction and ask what is expected if you are interested and want to learn?
- notice the circumstances that may have caused resistance and be curious about why these circumstances might have triggered that reaction?

References

1. Walker, R., Schultz, C., & Sonn, C. (2014). Cultural competence – transforming policy, services, programs and practice. In P. Dudgeon, H. Milroy & R. Walker, *Working together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing principles and practice* (2nd ed., pp. 195–220). Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Scan the following QR code to read this module on emergingminds.com.au (via Bitly):



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