

10 Steps to overcome racism

wirkara way

1

Acknowledge the Australian **'inconvenient truth'** we are a colonised nation and the legacy lives on but it has never been formally acknowledged and many people refuse to admit or fully explore this continuing reality. As a result, working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing is fraught with challenges we all need to address.

2

Avoid the excuse, **'I don't know how'**. You bring valuable knowledge. Remember, it's only a mistake if you make it twice. Wisdom comes from learning from mistakes and not repeating them.

3

Let go of the fear of being racist and fear of getting things wrong. Engage respectfully and you'll learn as you go.

4

Avoid the excuse, **'it's all too hard'** while occupying positions of power- change your attitude and then take action to change the narrative.

5

Understand that cultural safety requires health care providers to **'see'** their own culture and its assumptions. Racism doesn't have to be intended- it's often built in the way systems work. Get over worrying about it, and do something. The more you practice, the easier it gets.

6

Don't be afraid to take a leap of trust in the relationship... if this fails, take a longer leap but don't give up!

Time + Respect = Trust

7

Please don't think you **'know it all'** about Aboriginal health and wellbeing from participating in a cultural competency workshop- that's just the beginning. Working to close the colonial health system gaps is reciprocal lifelong learning that can grow into lifelong friendships.

8

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need space to talk with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to resolve issues and to strategies. This is not **'reverse racism'** it is Indigenous Peoples' right! (UNDRIP, 2007)

9

Question your own defensive reactions –if you make a mistake, admit and work towards fixing it. This is an example of humility and integrity, which are strengths required to work **wikara way**.

10

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people carry knowledge, experiences and strategies from community Elders to the medical practitioner. Lighten the load by respecting and valuing all the knowledge and being an ally **wirkara way**.