

Challenges facing non-indigenous researchers undertaking research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities

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Background:

Culturally appropriate research in indigenous setting produces unique challenges to non-indigenous researchers.

Need to minimise risks disempowering already marginalised communities.

AIM:

To gain an understanding of the cultural processes when undertaking research in an indigenous setting such as in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Methodology

Requires inquiry and immersion process.

Research conventions adapted to reflect culturally safe terminology and appropriate medical yarning.

Health research ethics must reflect consideration of ATSI values.

Requirements

- ✓ Permission needs to be sought from community elders
- ✓ Observation requires 'Senior Indigenous Health Care Worker' present to explain in LOTE research process & obtain consent & avoid miscommunication
- ✓ Explanatory statements & consent forms: use culturally safe terminology & appropriate medical yarning
- ✓ Address how to manage partially disrobed clients
- ✓ Familiarise oneself with use of non-verbal cues; e.g. raising eyebrows for YES
- ✓ Obtain supporting letters from Allied Health leads for ASTI
- ✓ Ethics application must reflect 6 core values of ASTI: spirit and integrity, reciprocity, cultural respect and safety, equality, responsibility, and survival and protection

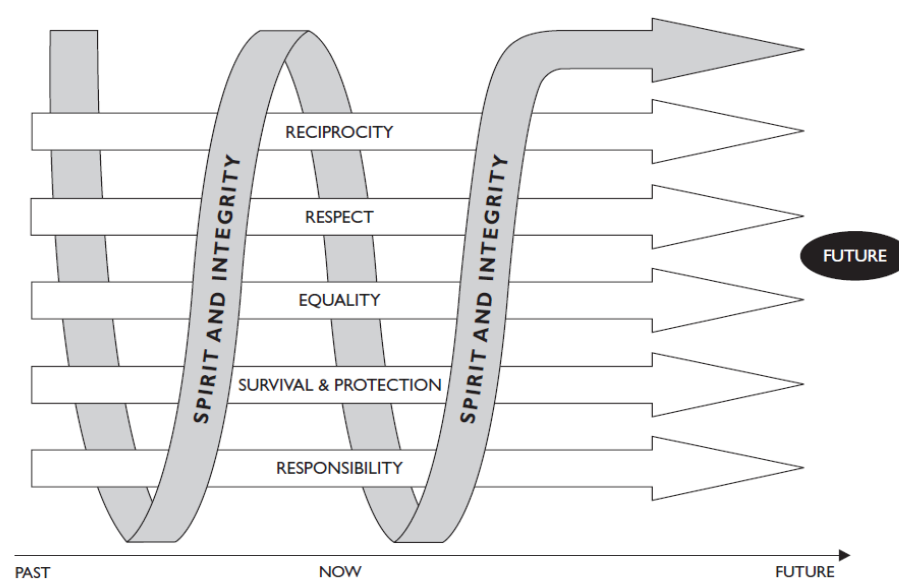


Diagram 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples values relevant to health research ethics

REFERENCE:
Human Research Ethics Handbook, Commentary on the National Statement, NHMRC, 2001;p 12

RESULTS & CONCLUSION

Gaps emerged in novice non-indigenous researcher knowledge. Training strategies: adopt creative ways of undertaking research in a complex, cultural environment. Need to adopt a culturally safe communication style. Demonstrate respect & acknowledgement of contribution of ASTI participants to research process. Transformative research process: quest towards ensuring cultural safety in ASTI whilst achieving goals of intended research.