

Partnerships, human rights and cultural competency: An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Occupational Therapy perspective

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Presentation aims



To provide occupational therapists with information and practical strategies for developing partnerships and culturally competent services, embedded in human rights.

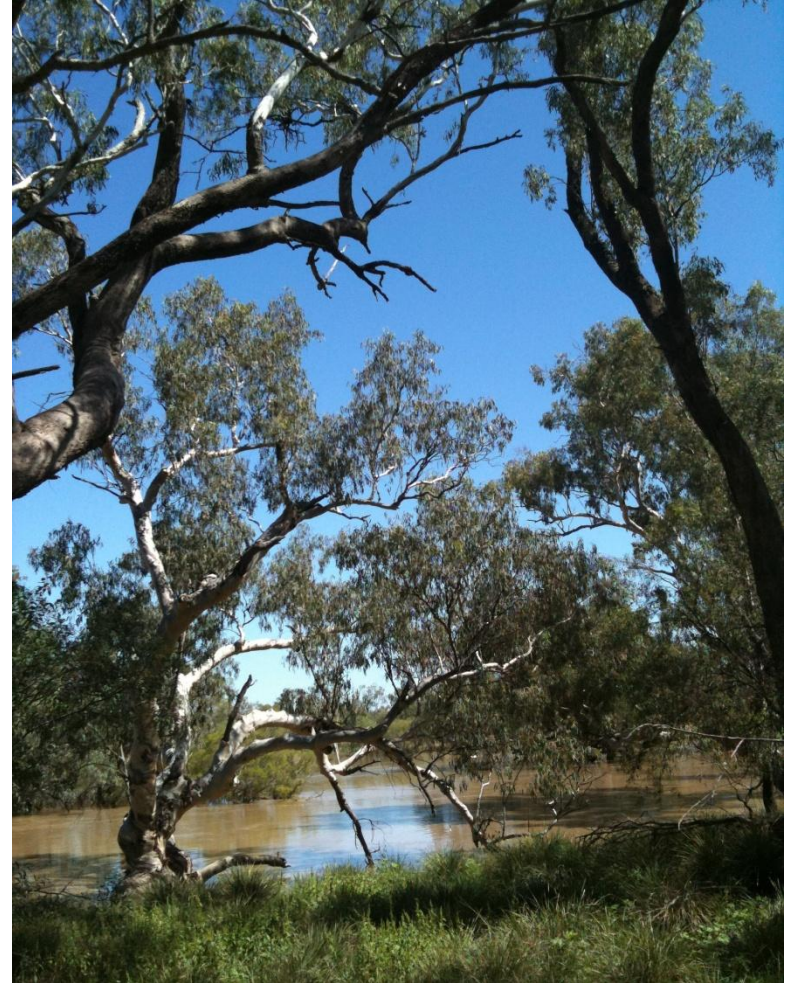
Terminology and concepts of both health and occupations in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Preferred terminology

There is not one preferred terminology. According to the Human Rights Commission (2012), the most preferred terminology is:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- First Nations, and
- First Peoples

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may also choose terminology that is meaningful to themselves and/or community.



Health and occupation: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives

- Health is viewed in a holistic manner, with a whole-of-life approach. Constructs of health are always bounded by cultural, social and individual contexts.
- Occupations are also considered in this holistic manner and are contextualised.
- The literature on occupations illustrates:
 - Connections with family, health, spirituality, land etc
 - Cultural roles and responsibilities
 - Family roles and responsibilities
 - Increased caring roles
 - Elder & older peoples' roles and responsibilities



**Partnerships: The why, the
who and the how.**

Why are partnerships important?

The benefits for the occupational therapy profession building partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, include opportunities for:

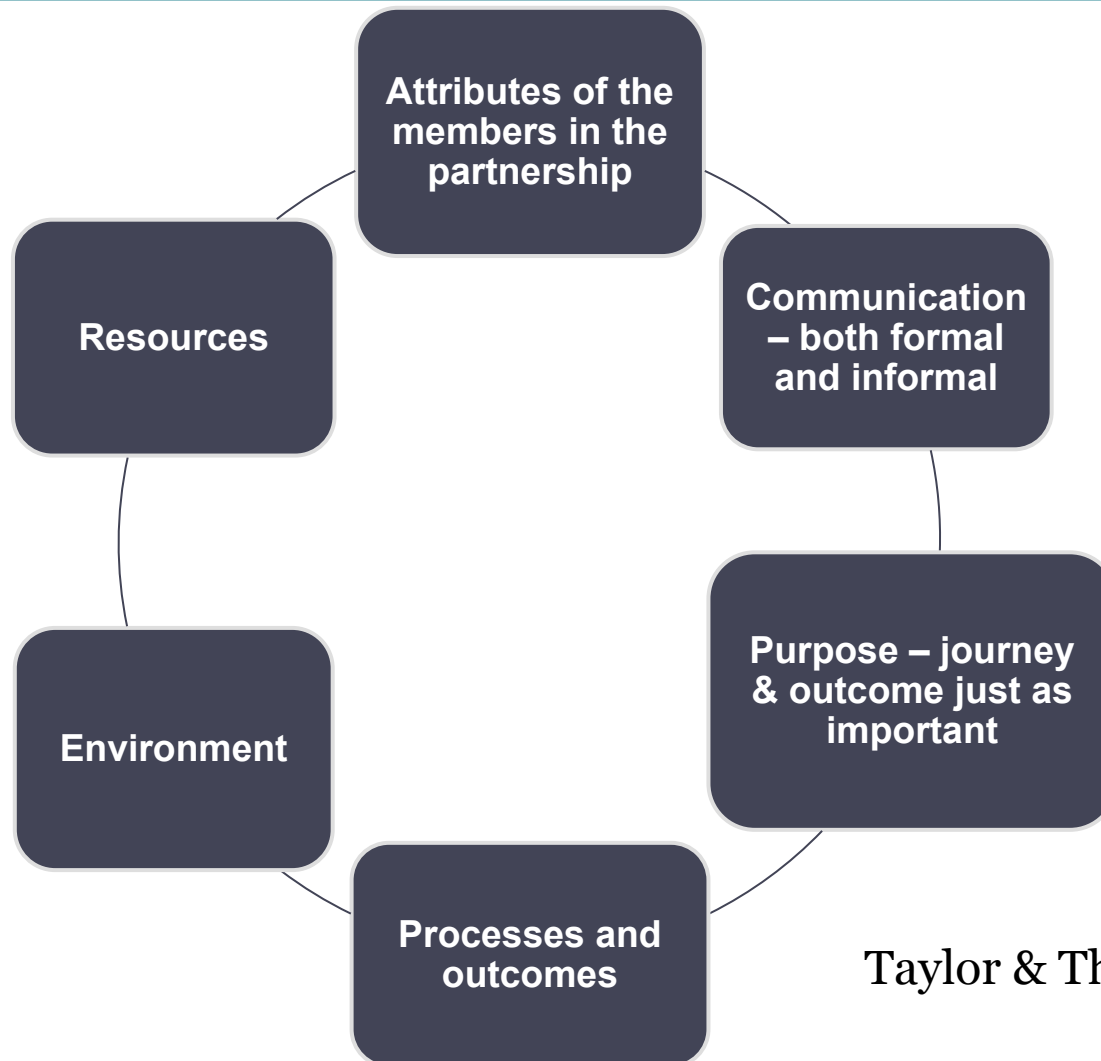
- building relationships and connections
- valuing and privileging world views, beliefs and values
- listening and developing services that are relevant and appropriate
- developing an understanding of occupations and health
- being reflexive and responsive
- facilitating cultural competent services
- supporting a human-rights approach

Who are our key partners?

Key partners may include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations that will benefit, use or require the professional practice eg AMS, Lands Councils
- Other health and health-related service providers that can contribute to the partnership eg home modification services, education, OTA
- Remember to work within your local, regional, state and national contexts

How to build partnerships?



Taylor & Thompson, 2011

Human rights: Some implications for practice

Incorporating a human-rights based approach in partnerships

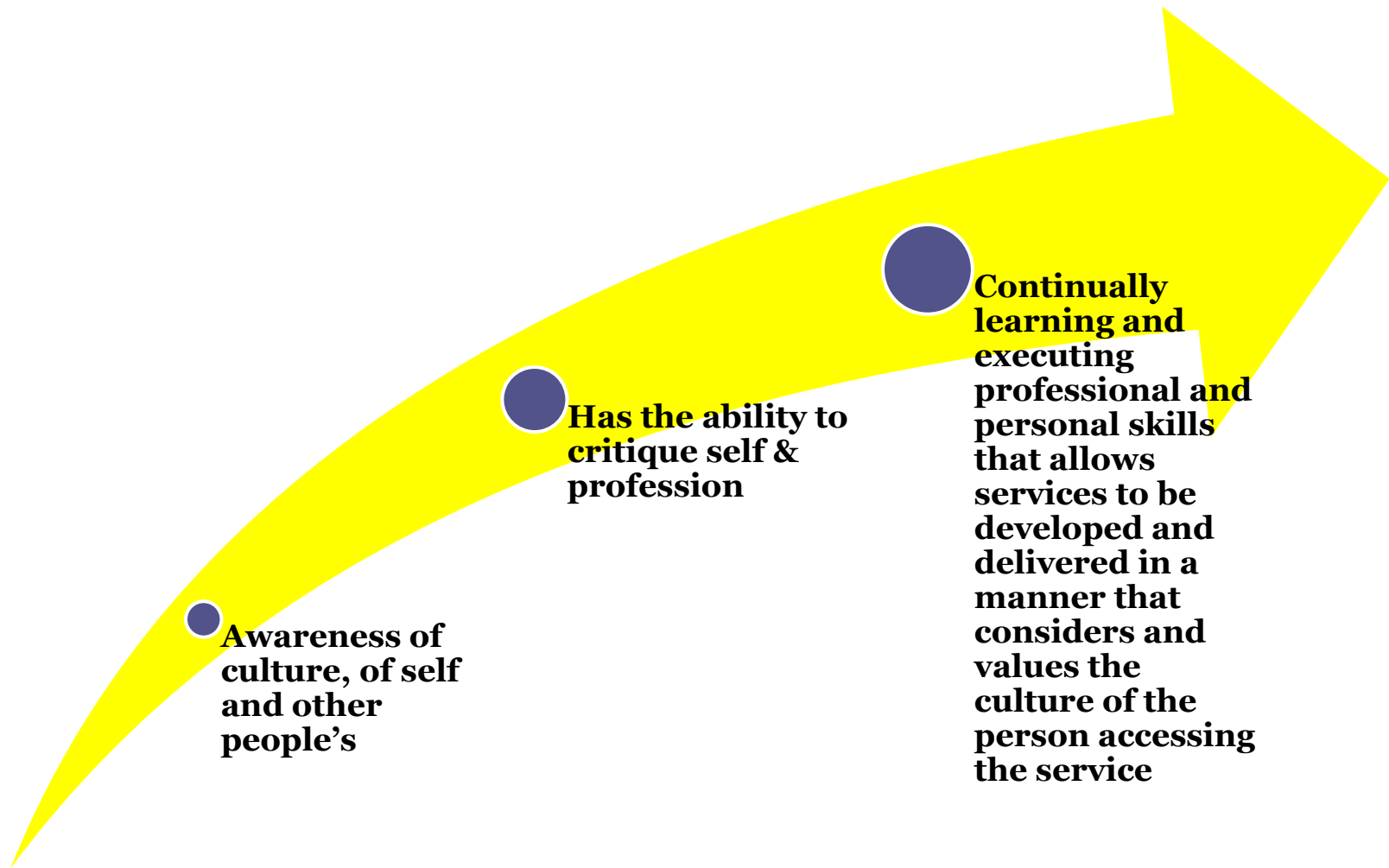
Some ways to incorporate a human-rights based approach includes:

- Valuing and privileging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultural beliefs, values and ways of life (self-determination).
- The development of health promotion, services and policies that are reflective of cultural beliefs, values and ways of life.
- A high level and appropriate engagement and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:
 - from inception of the idea
 - through the development and implementation
 - in the evaluation

of any program, project, service development, evaluation, higher education pedagogy, curriculum development etc.

Cultural competency: What is it, what the literature says about it and some guiding principles for occupational therapy.

What is cultural competency?



What does the literature say?

Inside the occupational therapy profession:

- WFOT and others have provided some insights on diversity
- Limited literature relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Swan & Raphael (1995) and Yalmimbira (2000), earlier literature providing insight for occupational therapy.

Outside the occupational therapy profession:

- Significant body of literature and evidence
 - Social and emotional wellbeing
 - Dementia
 - Chronic health
 - Children and maternal health

Occupations and culturally competency: Some guiding principles

1. Be reflexive and responsive in practice, understand why and how you practice as an occupational therapist.
2. Be flexible, adaptable and open to working in ways of knowing, being and doing that may not be aligned with your personal or professional values.
3. Build authentic connections and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Occupations and culturally competency: Some guiding principles

4. Be mindful that the theories of occupation are often embedded in Western Science and Western applications.
5. Create opportunities to understand occupations from the individual, community and/or organisation's perspectives.
6. Use your understanding of the person, their lived experiences, aspirations, strength, resilience and health needs to inform your clinical reasons for assessment and treatment.

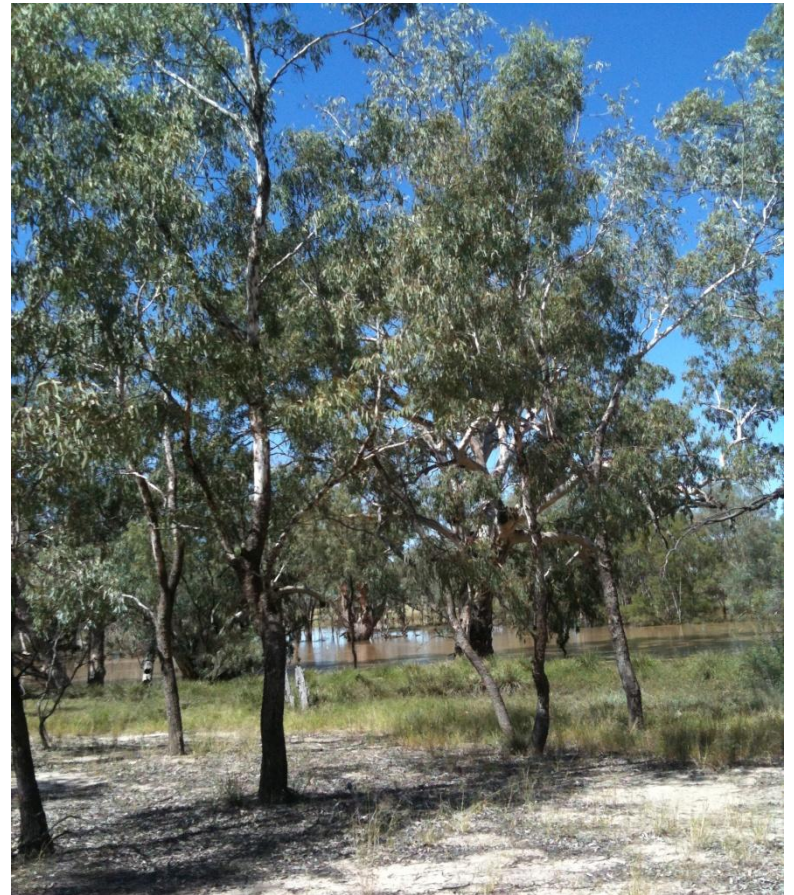
Conclusion

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Occupations from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective, to a large extent has not yet been explored in occupational therapy.

Partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples promote a better understanding of occupations.

Using a human-rights based approach facilitates a strength-based partnership that is collegial and collaborative, and is supportive of culturally competent practice.



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