

Australian Evaluation Society

# First Nations Cultural Safety Framework



Sharon Gollan and Kathleen Stacey

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**About the authors**

Sharon Gollan is a descendent of the Ngarrindjeri nation of South Australia, with family and cultural connections to many communities within and beyond South Australia. Sharon is well known for and under constant demand to facilitate 'Cultural Respect and Safety' training workshops, having done this since 1994. Kathleen Stacey is a white Australian who has co-facilitated 'Cultural Respect and Safety' training in university and a broad range of organisational contexts with Sharon for over 20 years. Since 1999, Sharon and Kathleen have regularly worked in partnership to design and implement evaluation, strategic planning, program planning, policy development, community consultation, curriculum development, education/training, and social-emotional wellbeing projects, predominantly in health, education and human services sectors.

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The Indigenous Culture and Diversity Committee (ICDC) of the AES proposed and advocated for the creation of the Framework. The development was supported by a Reference Group, consisting of ICDC and representatives from the other main AES Committees.

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**AES Cultural Safety Framework Reference Group Members:** Sharon Clarke, Doyen Radcliffe, Tony Kiessler, Nicole Tujague, David Roberts, Rick Cummings, Marie Nissanka and Kara Scally-Irvine.

**Jasmine Miikika Craciun**, a proud Barkindji, Malyangapa woman, is the artist who did the artwork on the © beyond...(Kathleen Stacey & Associates) and Sharon Gollan & Associate diagrams. Jasmine also developed the artwork for the diagrams that Kathleen and Sharon created specifically for the Framework.

**Use of language for cultural identity**

'Australian First Nations people' is the language used to represent and be inclusive of people from a diversity of Aboriginal nations and Torres Strait Islander nations in Australia. This decision was made by the Australian First Nations members of the Cultural Safety Framework Reference Group. Other language may be interchanged on occasions, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or Indigenous peoples. This usually occurs when referring to other documents or contexts in which these are the preferred terms or quoting from other documents.

Non-Indigenous people is the language used to represent and be inclusive of Australians who are not First Nations people.



**Cover artwork**

© Daniel (Palawa) 'In Touch' 2020, acrylic on canvas

'Being in touch with myself and my community.'

This artwork was created through The Torch, a not for profit organisation, that provides art, cultural and arts industry support to Indigenous offenders and ex-offenders in Victoria. [www.thetorch.org.au](http://www.thetorch.org.au)

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# Foreword

The AES is committed to strengthening and building First Nation peoples' evaluation capacity in culturally safe evaluation theory, practice and use. We will work with our members to ensure that there is a strong community of First Nations evaluators and that evaluations are culturally safe in both process and product. We are committed to leading the evaluation community on reconciliation. Our Reconciliation Action Plan provides us with clear direction in realising this commitment.

We are committed to supporting emerging First Nations evaluators through our conference support grants and promoting excellence in Indigenous evaluation through the Annual Awards for Excellence in Evaluation. Our commitment to creating a strong community of First Nations evaluators is reflected in the increasing number of Indigenous evaluators at Board level and the influential work of the Indigenous Culture and Diversity Committee.

As outlined in the current AES strategic priorities 2019–2022, the aims we aspire to achieve are the following:

- A strong community of First Nations evaluators.
- Career pathways for First Nations evaluators.
- Commissioners who value culturally safe evaluation.
- Evaluations that are culturally safe in both process and product.
- All evaluators are culturally safe in their practice.
- Cultural safety is an essential evaluation competency.
- Ethical practice is followed.

The AES Cultural Safety Framework was developed to help us in realising these aims. It is one of the main strategies to address the Cultural Capacity priority for the AES strategic plan.



John Stoney



Sharon Clarke



Doyen Radcliffe



Kiri Parata

# Introduction

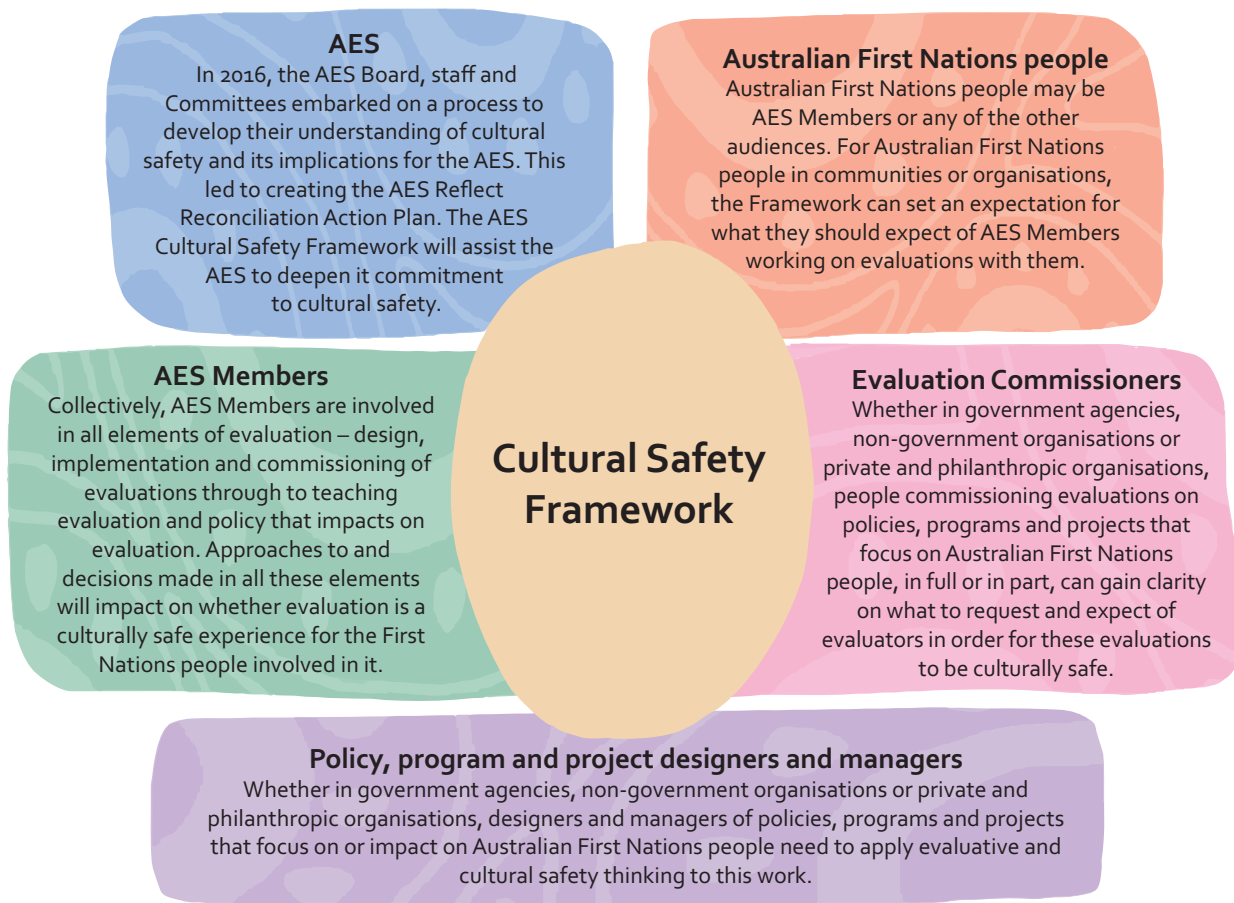
## Purpose

The AES Cultural Safety Framework (the Framework) is intended to:

1. Outline principles of culturally safe evaluation.
2. Provide practical guidance on the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the evaluation process.
3. Provide practical guidance on what contributes to culturally safe evaluation in all phases of the evaluation process, from design through to implementation, reporting, and translating the learnings into policy and practice.
4. Identify the outcomes that can be achieved through full and consistent implementation of the Framework.

## Audiences

The Framework was developed with five main audiences in mind.



# Framework development process

The Framework was developed through a co-design process with a Reference Group that consisted of members of the AES Indigenous Culture and Diversity Committee and representatives from the other main AES Committees. The Reference Group met on four occasions over the development process to reflect and advise on key steps in the process:

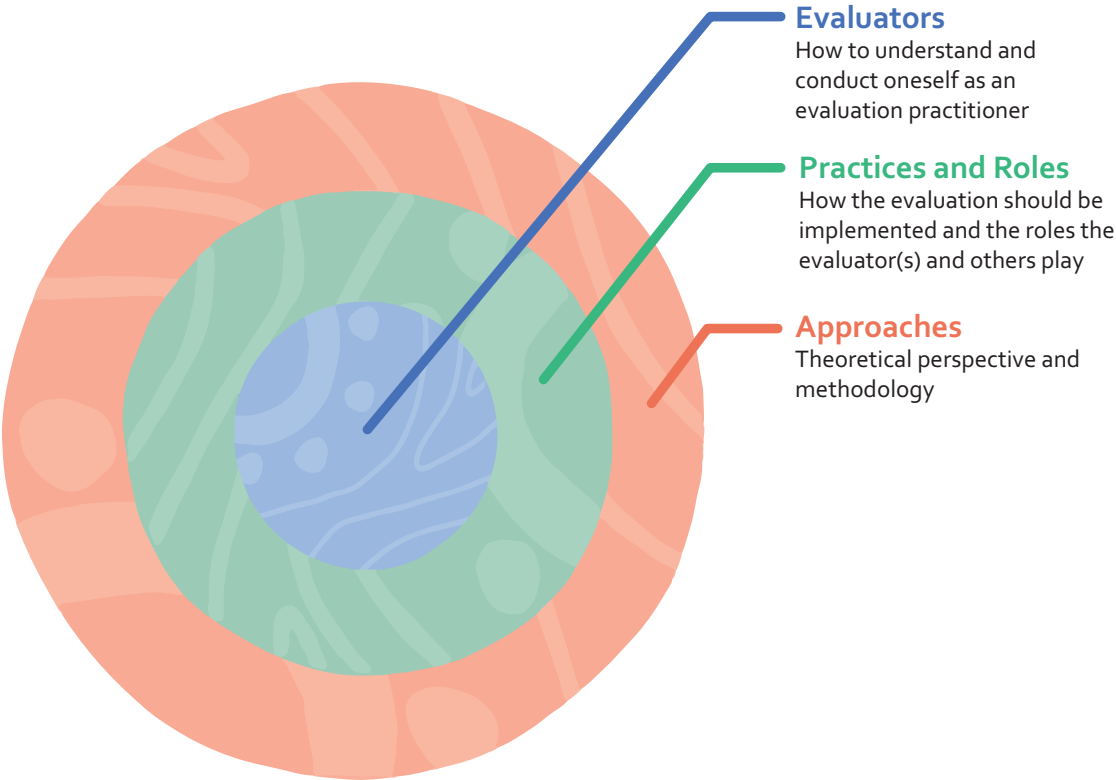
- 1. Reflect on the learnings from a review of the existing literature on cultural safety in evaluation and the structure and focus of other similar national or jurisdictional frameworks.
- 2. Review and advise on the initial draft of the Framework.
- 3. Review and advise on a second draft of the Framework.
- 4. Review the outcomes of a consultation with First Nations AES Members on the final draft of the Framework and advise on final adjustments to reach a final version of the Framework.

## Focus

The literature on cultural safety in evaluation can be categorised into these three areas: 1) evaluators, 2) evaluation practices and roles, and 3) evaluation approaches (see Figure 1). All three areas are connected – what happens in one area will always influence the other two.

Over the past two decades Australian First Nations academics, researchers and evaluators have explored a culturally centred approach to research and evaluation (Dudgeon, Bray Darlaston-Jones & Walker 2020; Martin & Mirrabooa 2003; Rigney 1999, 2001). This has led to an

**FIGURE 1: THREE FOCUS AREAS IN THE LITERATURE ON CULTURAL SAFETY IN EVALUATION**

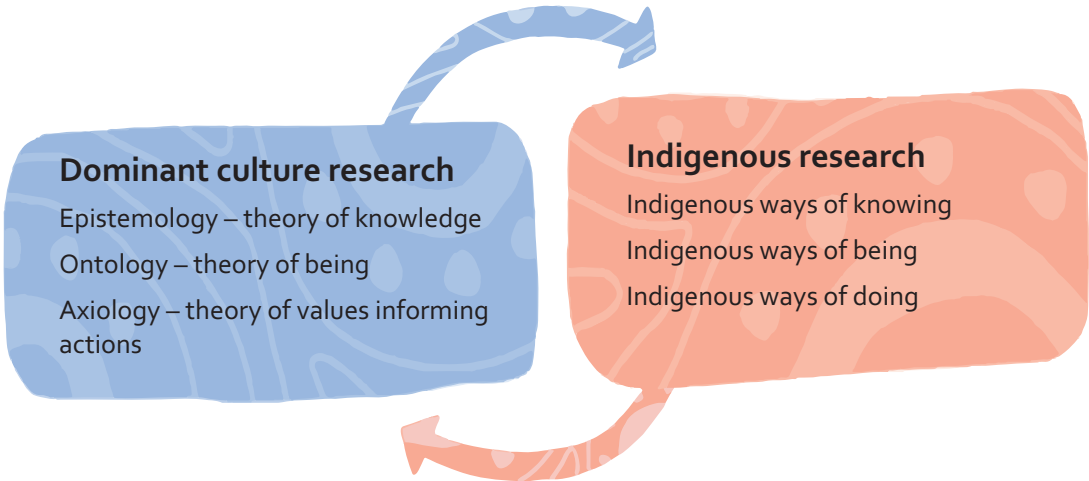




increasing use of the term 'Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing' within policy, practice, scholarship, research and evaluation. The research and evaluation literature refers to 'Indigenist research', 'Indigenous methodologies' and 'Indigenous Standpoint Theory' (e.g. Cargo & Potaka-Osborne et al. 2019; Dudgeon & Bray et al. 2020; Martin & Mirraboopa 2003; Rigney 1991, 2001; Rogers & Radcliffe et al. 2018; Whitau & Ockerby 2019; Williams 2018).

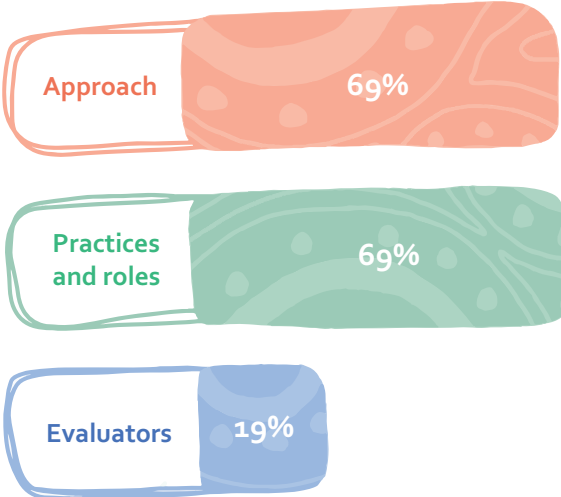
The equivalent language for Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing in Western knowledge systems and the dominant culture in Australia is epistemology, ontology and axiology, as illustrated in Figure 2.

**FIGURE 2: EQUIVALENT LANGUAGE IN WESTERN AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS**



If this is applied to the three focus areas in the literature on cultural safety in evaluation, then:

- 'evaluation approaches' reflect 'ways of knowing'
- 'evaluation practices and roles' reflect 'ways of doing'
- 'evaluators' reflect 'ways of being'.



A review of the existing literature on cultural safety in evaluation identified 36 relevant documents (Stacey & Gollan 2021b). Of this literature, well over two thirds included a focus on evaluation approaches and evaluation practices and roles. Only 19% focused on evaluators – specifically, how to understand and conduct oneself as an evaluation practitioner in Australian First Nations contexts.

As the purpose of the Framework is to provide practical guidance, the priority focus is on evaluators and evaluation practices and roles.

# Cultural safety

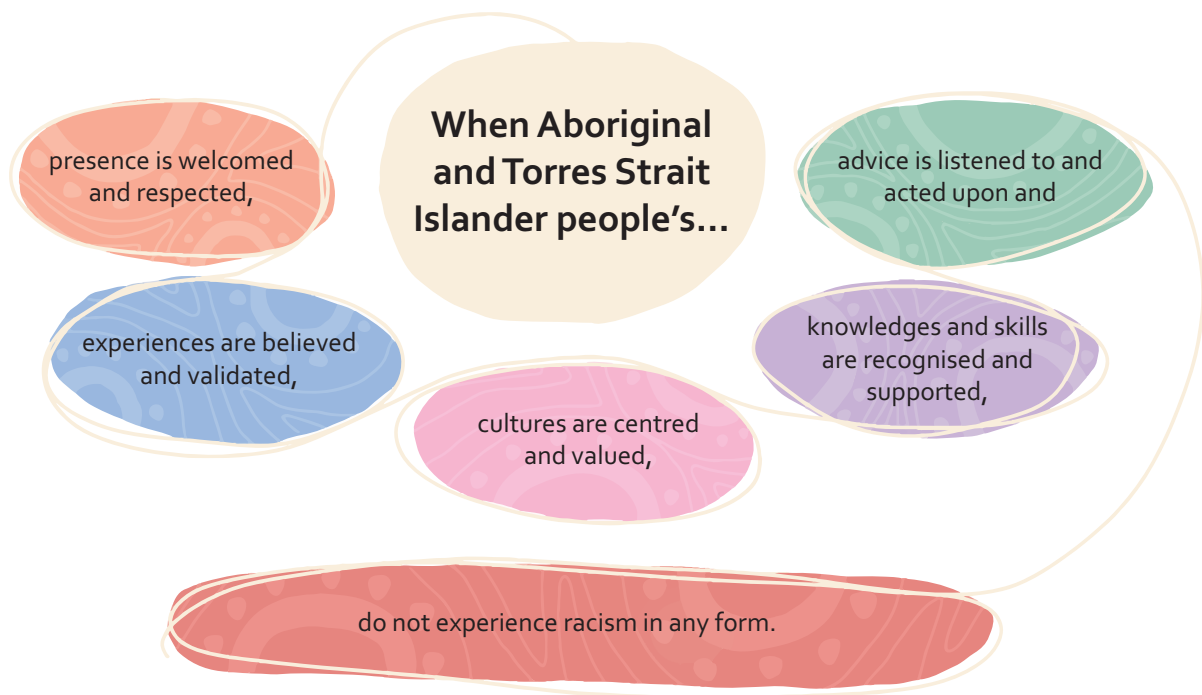
## What is cultural safety?

Over the last decade, there has been increased recognition among health, mental health, education, social and community support sectors that cultural safety is a pre-condition for Australian First Nations people to access, be involved in and thrive within workplaces and services.

The concept of cultural safety was initially developed in Aotearoa/New Zealand by a Maori nurse, Irihapeti Ramsden (2002). It has been adopted and adapted within the Australian context to the experiences of Australian First Nations people (CATSINaM 2017a, 2017b; Gollan & Stacey 2018a; Mohamed et al. forthcoming).

A culturally safe environment is created in policy development, evaluation, research and service design and delivery when the circumstances outlined in Figure 3 are in place. Non-Indigenous people have a high level of responsibility as well as significant capacity to create culturally safe environments; this is explored in the Framework.

**FIGURE 3: A CULTURALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR AUSTRALIAN FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE**



Forms of racism include:

... individual racism – when individual staff members practise racial prejudice and racial discrimination, and institutional racism – when organisational policies and practices do not consider or make room for Aboriginal people’s knowledges and experiences, and their cultural values, meanings and protocols. (Gollan & Stacey 2018a, Slide 6)

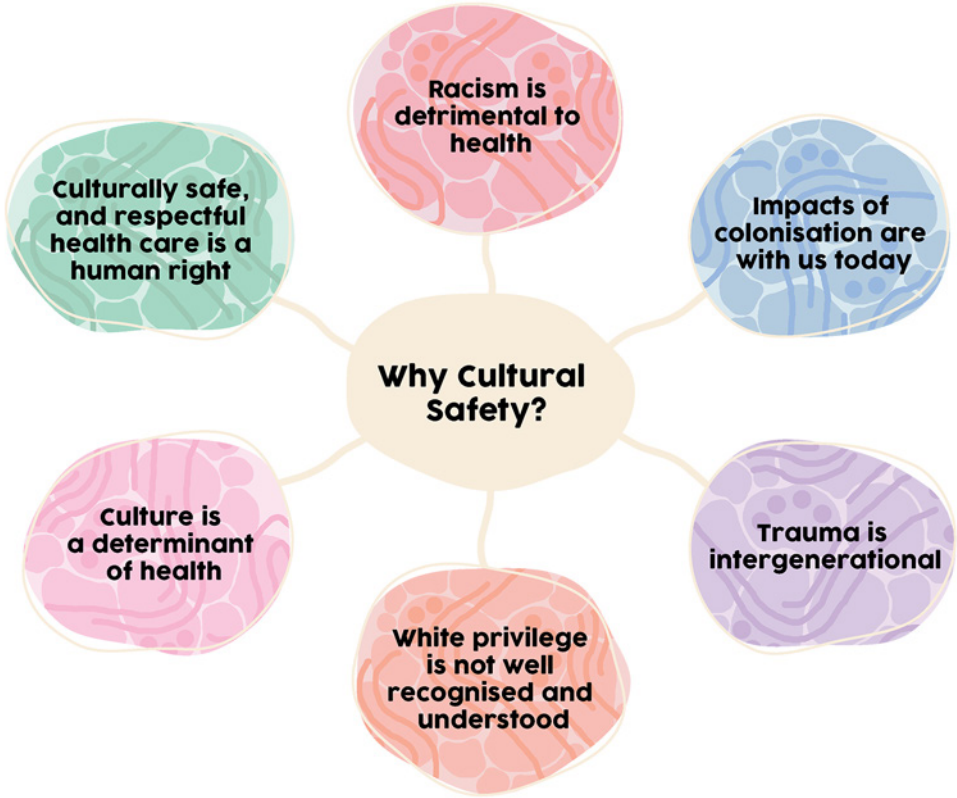
Cultural safety is an experience that Australian First Nations people have – its presence or absence can only be determined by them (Bond, Macoun & Singh 2018; Bond, Singh & Kajilich 2019; CATSINaM 2017a, 2017b; Walker, Schultz and Sonn 2014).

As described by Walker, Schultz and Sonn (2014) in a service environment:

Cultural safety is about practitioners and services working to enhance rather than diminish individual and collective cultural identities, and empower and promote individual, family and community wellbeing. Culturally safe service delivery is crucial in enhancing individual and collective empowerment and more effective and meaningful pathways to Aboriginal self-determination ... Importantly, cultural safety is not something that the practitioner, system, organisation or program can claim to provide but rather it is something that is experienced by the consumer/client. (p. 201)

The diagram in Figure 4 summarises why it is important for non-Indigenous people to understand cultural safety, no matter the environment within which they work.

**FIGURE 4: WHY IS CULTURAL SAFETY IMPORTANT FOR NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND?**



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## Why cultural safety rather than cultural competence?

Over the past 25 years, there has been considerable variation in the language used to refer to **what** enables the outcome in the green shape to be achieved:



It has ranged from cultural **awareness** to cultural **competence**, cultural **sensitivity**, cultural **respect**, cultural **capability**, cultural **responsiveness** and cultural **safety**.

AES has adopted a position consistent with many national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, particularly in the health sector (such as CATSINaM 2017a; IAHA 2019; NATSIHWA 2013) to use the term **cultural safety**.

This is preferred over other terms for the following reasons:

1. Cultural safety was developed in a First Nations context, initially in Aotearoa/New Zealand and then adopted and adapted within the Australian context. In contrast, cultural competence was developed in a cross-cultural context in the USA (Cross et al. 1989). While there are some shared experiences in relation to racism, there are distinct differences between the impact, experiences and outcomes of colonisation for Australian First Nations people compared with Australians from diverse cultural backgrounds who have arrived since colonisation.
2. The term cultural competence implies that full competence in a culture other than your own can be achieved. This is an ambitious and unlikely outcome that sends a misleading message. As explained by CATSINaM (2014):

There is a variation of opinion amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians about the utility and appropriateness of the term cultural competence. It is not always considered a realistic goal for non-Indigenous people to become culturally competent in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, particularly as there is such diversity amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Further, due to the significant interruption to cultural practices and knowledges caused by colonisation, some aspects have been lost for some or many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nation groups. Thus, aspiring to cultural competence within their own Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures can be challenging for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. (p. 12)

3. While a non-Indigenous person may be competent in a skill and can perform it competently in a cultural context other than their own, they may not do this in a manner that is **experienced** as culturally safe by Australian First Nations people involved.

4. The presence or absence of cultural safety is determined by Australian First Nations people in situ (CATSINaM 2017b; Walker, Schultz & Sonn 2014), not by the non-Indigenous practitioner or a standard set by an external body, even though standards can provide valuable guidance on what contributes to cultural safety. What may be experienced as culturally safe in one context may not necessarily be culturally safe in another context.

In summary, Aotearoa/New Zealand based academics Curtis et al. (2019) state a critical distinction between cultural competence and cultural safety that is equally relevant in the Australian context and the field of evaluation for Australian First Nations people:

Health practitioners, healthcare organisations and health systems need to be engaged in working towards cultural safety and critical consciousness. To do this, they must be prepared to critique the 'taken for granted' power structures and be prepared to challenge their own culture and cultural systems, rather than prioritise becoming 'competent' in the cultures of others. (p. 1)



Cultural safety is decolonising our thinking to give First Nation people a voice – without a voice we are faceless people – we too want to thrive and grow as people.

Doyen Radcliffe, Australian First Nations evaluator

# Challenging dominant culture benchmarks in evaluation

What is the benchmark for how evaluation is done in Australia? Whose values predominate in the evaluation field? The benchmark for what to do and how to do evaluation is defined by the dominant culture.

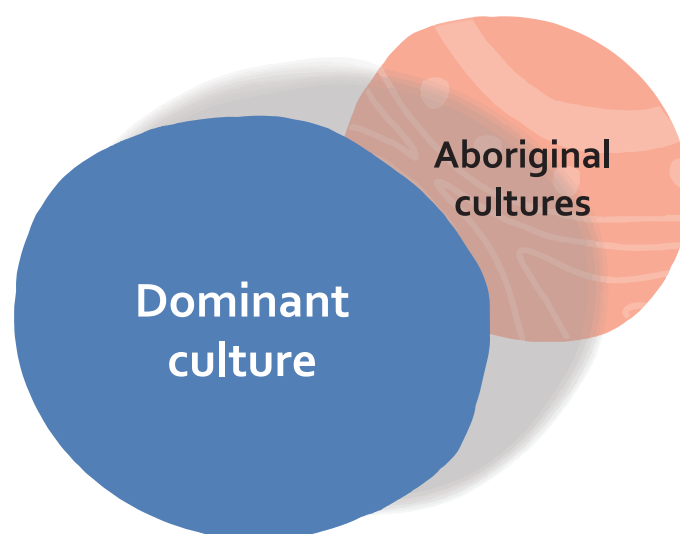
The term 'dominant culture' refers to the set of values, beliefs, standards and systems that govern and organise every aspect of our lives in Australia. Dominant culture laws, structures and decision-making processes place high emphasis on individualism, the pre-eminence of science, and the importance of property ownership. In turn, this shapes what is considered normal or 'business as usual' in institutions or sectors, such as health, education, human services, local government, the environment and all areas of industry.

The dominant culture in Australia is founded on British or Anglo-Celtic culture, which has shaped and infused our contemporary structures and systems: 'despite demographic changes, the major institutions in Australia and the political, legal, administrative and communication systems remain predominantly Anglo-Celtic' (Hartley 1995, p. 1). The imposition of dominant culture through institutional racism is a process of colonisation.

In defining what is considered normal, the dominant culture overshadows, invisibilises and dictates to any cultural values that fall outside of its own. An understanding of Australian history since invasion that is grounded in truth, clearly demonstrates the historical and ongoing impact of dominant culture on the cultures of Australian First Nations people, visually captured in Figure 5. Australian First Nations people live with intergenerational and accumulative trauma due to historical and ongoing colonisation (Atkinson 2002, 2013; Atkinson et al. 2014).

---

**FIGURE 5: IMPACT OF DOMINANT CULTURE**





If we don't get Indigenous evaluation right, we contribute to the inappropriate funding of projects and programs that don't work at the expense of those that do. We fuel racism and at worst, retrigger families and communities.

Nicole Tujague, Australian First Nations evaluator

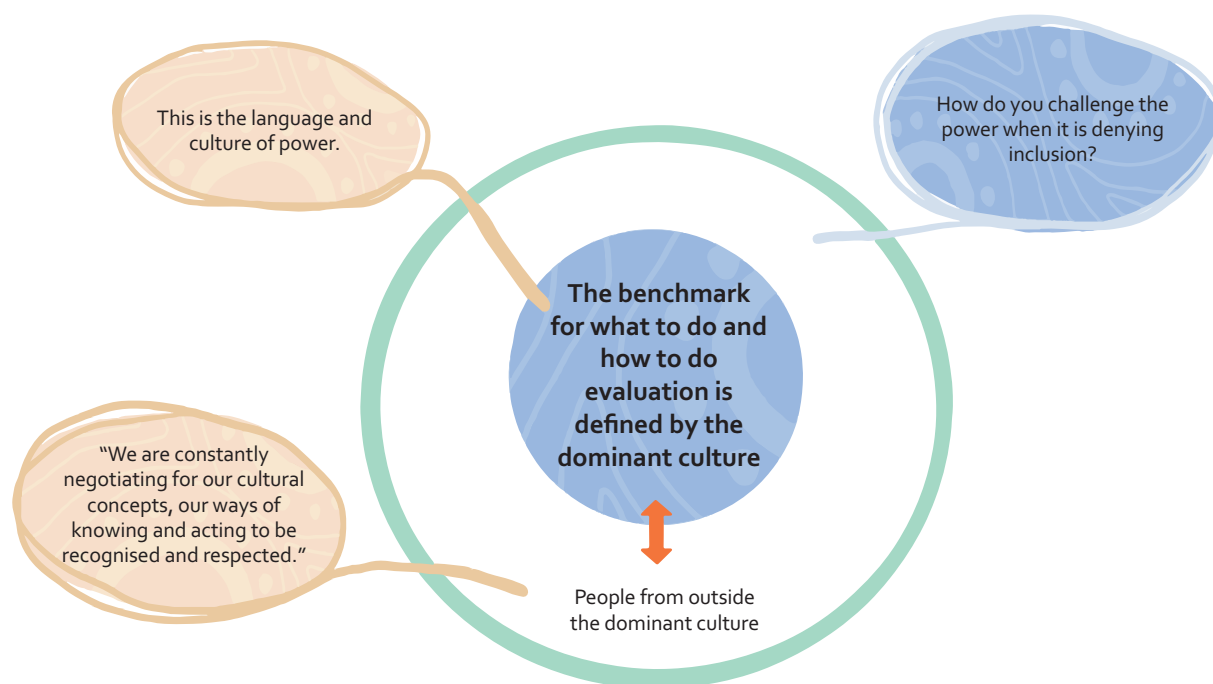
Australian First Nations people are constantly negotiating for their cultural concepts, ways of knowing, being and acting to be recognised, respected and realised – see Figure 6. The evaluation context is no different. Unless non-Indigenous evaluators play their role in making it different so Australian First Nations people are not dealing with individual and institutional racism as they lead, support or participate in evaluation.

In evaluation, or any other context, how do you challenge the power when it is denying inclusion? You can be included without having power. The impact is that Australian First Nations people become symbolic and advice is not translated into action. While Australian First Nations people's presence is visible, their expertise is invisibilised and neglected because the expectation is to cooperate with and conform to the language and culture of power in evaluation.

At times, even when the power is challenged it does not have the effect of creating inclusion. Australian First Nations voices can be included, but not actively listened to and

acted upon. This presents a critical task for the evaluation field – how to shift the benchmark in evaluation practice in Australian First Nations contexts.

**FIGURE 6: CHALLENGING DOMINANT CULTURE BENCHMARKS IN EVALUATION**



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# The Framework

## Principles of culturally safe evaluation

Ten principles emerged through development of the Framework that permeate every aspect of the AES Cultural Safety Framework and are reference points as people engage with and apply the Framework. The principles reflect the learning gained from the review of the existing literature on cultural safety in evaluation, and the professional and personal experience of the authors and Australian First Nations Reference Group members.

Each principle is **equally** important and **complementary** to the other principles, as illustrated in Figure 7. This is followed by a brief description of each principle.

FIGURE 7: PRINCIPLES SUPPORTING CULTURALLY SAFE EVALUATION



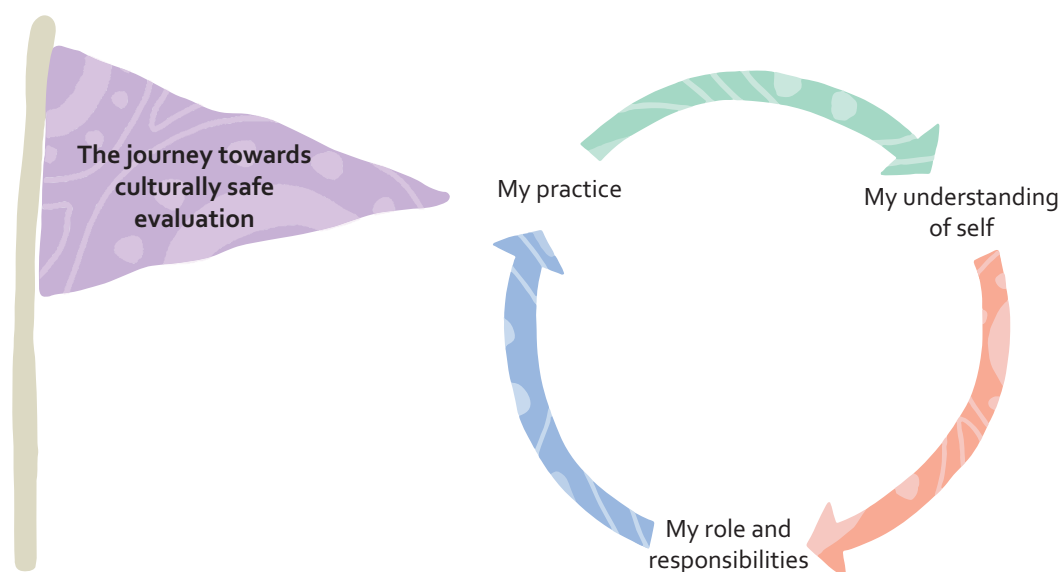
<b>Sovereignty</b>	Australian First Nations people never ceded sovereignty over their lands and now live in two worlds.
<b>Know and understand the truth</b>	Reflect on the context of historical and ongoing colonisation of Australia that results in ongoing racism and intergenerational trauma, as this sets an important context for the challenges Australian First Nations people face and the aspirations they express.
<b>Diversity and uniqueness</b>	Australian First Nations cultures are diverse, as are First Nations people within nations. Avoid assumptions – one size does not fit all.
<b>Time</b>	Take time to develop relationships and build trust in every project, even if you have previously been involved in the community and/or organisation – do not rush the process.
<b>Decision-making</b>	Commit to co-design – involve the community and/or organisation in designing the process so their expectations are embedded into the work. Who will be involved? How will they be involved? How will you ensure equity of voice and decision-making?
<b>Respect</b>	Demonstrate genuine respect for cultural values, protocols and knowledges; accept this may require flexibility.
<b>Adaptability</b>	Value and plan for flexibility so you can be adaptive in your approach and plans.
<b>Leadership and expertise</b>	Create Australian First Nations led or co-led teams – integrate cultural expertise into the team through different roles such as cultural advisors, cultural brokers and locally based evaluators, interviewers and/or facilitators.
<b>Benefit</b>	Discuss with First Nations communities and/or organisations what they will gain from the evaluation that will be valuable to them. Consider what you contribute – what do you leave behind from the evaluation? How will you recognise and remunerate the service and expertise of Elders and other community members who participate in the evaluation?
<b>Intellectual and cultural property</b>	First Nations communities have ownership of the information or data you gather during the evaluation. It is important not to assume that you do.



## What contributes to culturally safe evaluation?

Cultural safety is a life-long journey for everyone involved. Once people step into the journey, it is about staying on the journey, not arrival at a pre-defined destination. As depicted in Figure 8, this occurs through a recursive and ongoing commitment of observing, listening, reflecting, discussing, acting and learning.

**FIGURE 8: TAKING THE JOURNEY TOWARDS CULTURALLY SAFE EVALUATION**



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As each focus area is described, the term 'evaluators' is used to be inclusive of different parties involved in the evaluation process, including evaluation team leaders, evaluation team members and evaluation commissioners, unless commissioners are specifically and separately identified.

### Focusing on evaluators

This section focuses on how non-Indigenous evaluators can engage in critical self-reflection as a practice of cultural safety. It may resonate for Australian First Nations evaluators as they consider how they contribute to cultural safety and what they expect of non-Indigenous people with whom they work.

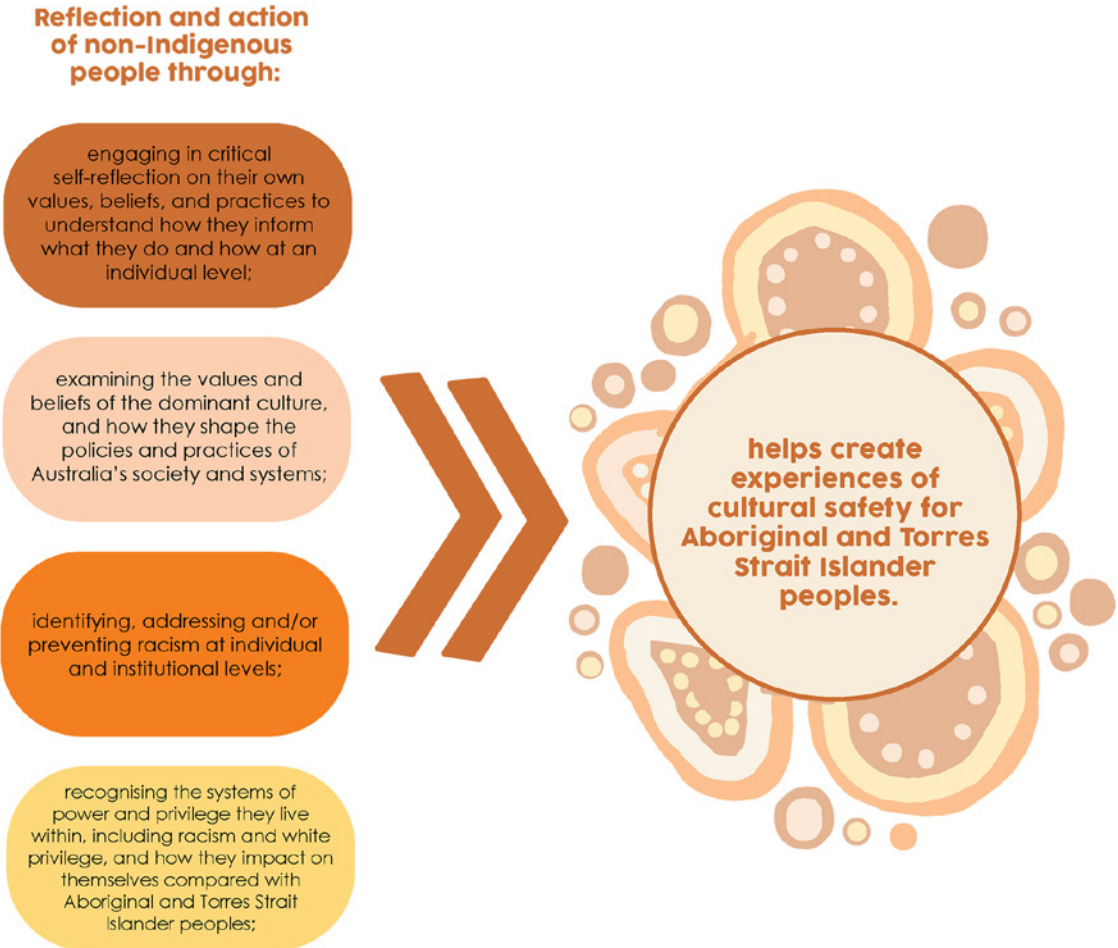
#### Capacity for critical self-reflection

Critical self-reflection is also known as reflexivity or decolonisation (Dudgeon & Bray et al. 2020; Rix, Barclay & Wilson 2014). It refers to reflecting on the values and assumptions you hold about yourself, other people, and the contexts in which you work and live (Somerville & Keeling, 2004). It requires an understanding of the social, cultural and political landscapes in which you operate. This is an important capacity for all evaluators.

Why does your capacity for critical self-reflection impact on cultural safety for Australian First Nations people? As non-Indigenous evaluators, your cultural identity and social positioning within the wider Australian historical and contemporary context shape the approaches you take to evaluation design, implementation, reporting, and dissemination and application of learnings. Your cultural identity and social positioning influence how you view, value and interact with First Nations people involved in the evaluation as colleagues, organisations, communities or participants. Further, it affects how you are experienced by First Nations people involved in the evaluation as colleagues, organisations, communities or participants.

As a form of self-research, critical self-reflection involves asking yourself honest questions and considering topics such as power, inclusion, racism and white privilege that may be uncomfortable yet illuminating. Figure 9 illustrates four critical areas of reflection and action for non-Indigenous evaluators that can better equip you as you work towards cultural safety working alongside First Nations evaluators and other First Nations people involved in the evaluation process.

**FIGURE 9: WHAT NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE CAN DO TO CREATE EXPERIENCES OF CULTURAL SAFETY**



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## Critical self-reflection focusing on evaluators

Many of the critical self-reflection questions require a yes/no response. If your response is:

- 'No', the next step in your critical self-reflection is to ask, 'What do I need to do about this?'
- 'Yes', the next step in the critical self-reflection process is to ask, 'How well am I doing this?' and 'What can I do to improve how I do this?'

Whatever the initial response, always finish with 'How will I know this is working well?'

Area	Critical self-reflection questions
<b>My capacities</b>	Have I undertaken cultural <b>safety</b> training?
	Can I explain what cultural safety is for Australian First Nations people?
	How familiar am I with the different forms of racism?
	Can I recognise racism?
	Can I address racism in my practice?
	Do I address racism in my practice?
	Do I understand what white privilege is?
	Do I recognise if white privilege is interrupting my engagement with Australian First Nations people?
<b>My values</b>	What personal values do I hold that are consistent with cultural safety?
	What personal values can I cultivate that are consistent with cultural safety?
	What professional values do I hold that are consistent with cultural safety?
	What professional values can I cultivate that are consistent with cultural safety?



Culturally safe evaluation practice gets better results because it recognises the unique perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the custodians of knowledge about their communities, families and practices.

Tony Kiessler, Australian First Nations evaluator

## Focusing on evaluation roles and responsibilities

This section focuses on how non-Indigenous evaluators redefine their roles in terms of partnerships based on cultural accountability as a practice of cultural safety while working alongside Australian First Nations colleagues and evaluation participants or stakeholders.

### Creating partnerships based on cultural accountability

Good partnerships have become an essential component of successful programs and services in the contemporary human and community service environment. Achieving good partnerships involves more than using certain words in funding submissions and program plans. It requires thoughtful decisions based on an appreciation of the types of partnership relationships, the situations to which they are suited, the benefits they offer to all partners, and the qualities that support their success. (Social Inclusion Board 2007, p. 3)

The partnerships we are referring to in this Framework are based on **cultural accountability**.

Cultural accountability in Australian First Nations contexts describe partnerships between non-Indigenous people and Australian First Nations people that are based on several principles. It requires the **elevation** of the voices of First Nations people and the **accountability** of non-Indigenous people to First Nations people and their cultural values. It involves non-Indigenous people starting from a position of listening, hearing and learning rather than knowing, and expecting and accepting that mistakes may be made so the focus needs to be on acknowledging and recovering from them.

Practising cultural accountability involves critical self-reflection on the three intersecting themes of culture, identity and power in Figure 10. Doing this can be helpful in reviewing the cultural safety of your practice as non-Indigenous people involved in evaluation and working alongside Australian First Nations people colleagues and/or with Australian First Nations people organisations, communities or participants. If you sense, notice or receive feedback that the experience is not going smoothly, these three themes provide a quick touchpoint in considering what you can focus on or do differently.

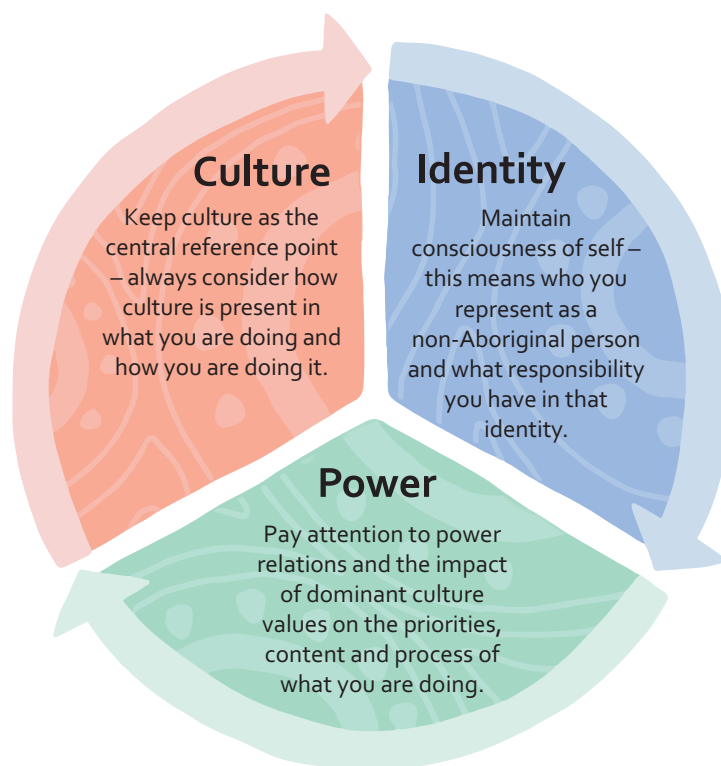
For example:

- Is culture a central reference point for thinking about your role?
- How are you maintaining consciousness of your identity and responsibility as a non-Aboriginal person?
- What is happening with power – are you imposing or creating meaning only based on dominant culture values? Whose realities do these meanings represent?



Our responsibility as non-Indigenous evaluators is to commit to critical self-reflection and cultural accountability as ongoing practices. It will help us recognise and address personal and professional challenges we may face in our evaluation roles and practices. In turn, this can create positive impacts and culturally safe experiences, and build genuine partnerships with Australian First Nations people involved in evaluation.

**FIGURE 10: THREE INTERSECTING THEMES IN CULTURAL ACCOUNTABILITY**



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## Being an ally

An ally is a person from a group who has structural power and privilege and stands in solidarity with people from groups in society without the same structural power and privilege. To address inequity, Kivel (2002) emphasises that 'being an ally ... is an ongoing strategic process in which we look at our personal and social resources, evaluate the environment we have helped to create, and decide what needs to be done' (p. 94). In the Australian evaluation field, non-Indigenous people – especially white people, have structural power and privilege. Therefore, a role available for non-Indigenous people in evaluation is to become an ally to Australian First Nations people in evaluation.

Being an effective ally depends on building relationships of trust with Australian First Nations people involved in evaluation, whether as colleagues, organisations, communities or participants. As you will be judged on what you do more than what you say, consistency between what you say and do is vital. Building trust means walking your talk. Critical self-reflection is an active process as much as it is an introspective process. Cultural accountability needs to be witnessed and

felt by First Nations people. It is reflected in how you interact with and respond to First Nations people, and how you advocate for cultural safety with other non-Indigenous people.

Hardy (2016, pp. 127–133) has identified five tasks and tactics that are instructive for building trust in becoming and being an ally that are described in Figure 11.

**FIGURE 11: TASKS AND TACTICS FOR BECOMING AN ALLY IN ANTI-RACISM AND CULTURAL SAFETY**



In Task 2, **privempathy** is the term that Ken Hardy has coined to refer to the ‘empathy of the privileged. It often negates the disclosures of persons in the subjugated position by offering parallels or similarities to the shared disclosure while simultaneously negating it by advocating false notions of equality’ (2016, pp. 129–130).

The four situations described below translate Hardy’s advice into an evaluation context, demonstrating what would be different if his tasks and tactics were applied. The application of more than one task and tactic is required in most situations. All examples resemble actual experiences of one or more authors and Reference Group members. Three situations describe an interaction between First Nations and non-Indigenous evaluators or commissioners. In Situation 2, a non-Indigenous evaluator is operating as an ally for First Nations evaluation team members with the non-Indigenous commissioner.

**SITUATION 1**

**Negotiating with evaluation participants**

First Nations evaluator:

*Do you realise we had already made arrangements with that organisation about when we will visit, who we meet with and how we run the sessions? They have some difficult situations to deal with and need to give everyone time to recover. You just came in over the top and changed the plan without checking with us. The Board Members and staff are very upset and do not want to participate now. It will be difficult to rebuild those relationships.*

Non-Indigenous evaluator:

*We are all under pressure. You know the commissioner wants the evaluation report before the end of the year, so if the organisation wants their experience represented, they need to make someone available to participate sooner.*

APPLYING: **TASK 1** **TASK 3** **TACTIC 1** **TACTIC 3**

First Nations evaluator:

*Do you realise we had already made arrangements with that organisation about when we will visit, who we meet with and how we run the sessions? They have some difficult situations to deal with and need to give everyone time to recover. You just came in over the top and changed the plan without checking with us? The Board Members and staff are very upset and do not want to participate now. It will be difficult to rebuild those relationships.*

Non-Indigenous evaluator:

*No, you are absolutely right. I rushed in and panicked when I got the commissioner’s call and did not check. You and the organisation must be very distressed about this. I have really messed this up. I will do whatever I can to help recover this as the organisation has a right to be represented. I will take responsibility for dealing with the commissioner but will take your lead on how I can apologise and repair the damage with the organisation.*

## SITUATION 2

### Questioning evaluation methodology

This occurred after submission of a progress report that outlined progress with gaining ethics approval and commencement of home visits for interviews with First Nations evaluation participants.

Non-Indigenous commissioner:

*I am concerned about how [the First Nations evaluators] are organising the home visits, particularly if they are being done out of hours. Have they thought through the safety issues? You know, I have a lot of experience as a researcher and doing home visits. We would not have designed the home visits like this.*

Non-Indigenous evaluator:

*As described in our progress report, the methodology was outlined in our ethics proposal that was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee based at [First Nations organisation]. They did not raise any concerns. I have complete confidence in and respect for [First Nations evaluator] as the senior team member on the home visits. She has extensive experience in research and evaluation with First Nations peoples. It is racially prejudiced to criticise her ability and not criticise mine as the evaluation project manager, as I agreed this methodology was appropriate.*

APPLYING:

TASK 2

TACTIC 2

Non-Indigenous evaluator:

*I was a bit surprised by how [the First Nations evaluators] are organising the home visits, particularly if they are being done out of hours. I have a lot of experience as a researcher and would not have designed the home visits like this. However, I understand this was a whole of team decision and you gained approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee based at [First Nations organisation]. I know that [First Nations evaluator] has a lot of evaluation experience with First Nations families, so I should trust her judgement as the senior team member. I will be really interested to hear how this goes and what I can learn if I do more research with First Nations families myself.*

Non-Indigenous commissioner:

*Yes, I definitely think there are things to learn here, including for me. I have complete confidence in and respect for [First Nations evaluator as the senior team member on the home visits] and was delighted she was available so we could work together again and co-lead the project. She has a wealth of knowledge and skills. Also, she was happy to mentor [another First Nations evaluator on the team] who is just stepping into evaluation work and is doing the home visits with her.*



### SITUATION 3

## Being notified of an evaluation by the funder

First Nations program manager:

*Why does the Department want another evaluation without even discussing it with us, and then only five months to do it. The organisation that auspices our program completed a comprehensive review of all programs just two months ago. All our staff along with many clients and families participated. I am sure that can be shared with the Department in the interim. We are going into a very busy three months – we have the anniversary celebrations and major national events that are important for clients. This is an unreasonable request, in fact, it is institutionally racist. I don't feel comfortable putting clients and families through this process again just now.*

Non-Indigenous commissioner:

*It is futile to complain. I am often in the same boat of having to do things quickly when it is inconvenient or when I do not agree with it. Anyway, you know it is in the best interests of the program and clients to participate in the evaluation. There is a funding allocation review later this year and your program will be included so you need to put aside your personal anxiety and anger, and comply. It will be worse for clients if there is no program.*

APPLYING:

TASK 2

TASK 4

TACTIC 1

TACTIC 2

TACTIC 4

First Nations program manager:

*Why does the Department want another evaluation without even discussing it with us, and then only five months to do it. The organisation that auspices our program completed a comprehensive review of all programs just two months ago. All our staff along with many clients and families participated. I am sure that can be shared with the Department in the interim. We are going into a very busy three months – we have the anniversary celebrations and major national events that are important for clients. This is an unreasonable request, in fact, it is institutionally racist. I don't feel comfortable putting clients and families through this process again just now.*

Non-Indigenous commissioner:

*To be honest with you, I was stressed about having to tell you this. I can appreciate how frustrated you are and concerned about how a rushed evaluation may impact on staff and clients. It is unreasonable. I advocated that the Department discuss and plan it with you first, so you could design how and when it happened. Also, to defer the review of your program as late as possible, such as early next year. I realise it is an imposition and shouldn't happen this way. I think I should try again on this. Would it be helpful if I spoke with both you and the CEO and we develop a letter proposing a different approach and timing to your program's evaluation? I think it is a great idea to offer the outcomes of the recent organisational review in the interim for the funding allocation review.*

## SITUATION 4

### Finalising the methodology

Non-Indigenous evaluator:

*Based on my evaluation experience with Aboriginal communities in the Top End, I am confident the approach we have described in the evaluation proposal will work with the communities we need to visit in these other locations. We can just follow what we submitted.*

First Nations evaluator:

*It is wrong to assume all Aboriginal communities are the same. I would never do that. If we are doing these visits together you will need to be much more flexible. I haven't been to these communities myself, so I will also need to gain some advice on the appropriate approach.*

APPLYING:

TASK 5

TACTIC 5

Non-Indigenous evaluator:

*Although I have some evaluation experience with Aboriginal communities in the Top End, as a white person who is still learning about culturally safe evaluation practice, I don't want to assume that how I approached that work or what was described in the evaluation proposal is what we should do when visiting the communities in these other locations.*

First Nations evaluator:

*That is really important, as you know, all Aboriginal communities are not the same. I don't know these communities well and only have a few cultural connections with them, so I will also need to gain some advice on the appropriate approach.*

**Critical self-reflection focusing on evaluation roles and responsibilities**

Many of the critical self-reflection questions require a yes/no response. If your response is:

- 'No', the next step in your critical self-reflection is to ask, 'What do I need to do about this?'
- 'Yes', the next step in the critical self-reflection process is to ask, 'How well am I doing this?' and 'What can I do to improve how I do this?'

Whatever the initial response, always finish with 'How will I know this is working well?'

Area	Critical self-reflection questions
<b>My role and responsibilities as an ally</b>	Do I listen to and respect what Australian First Nations people tell me, even if it is difficult to hear?
	Do I acknowledge mistakes I make and address them?
	Do I change direction based on expertise and advice provided by Australian First Nations people?
	Do I recognise that I do not always need to know or understand the reasons for advice?
	Do I accept that an idea I have should not be pursued or not at this time?
	Do I discuss my experiences with working towards cultural safety with other people, including other non-Indigenous allies?
	Can I address racism in other people's practice?
	Do I address racism in other people's practice?
	Do I recognise if other people's white privilege is interrupting engagement with Australian First Nations people?
	Do I understand how to use white privilege to advocate for cultural safety?
<b>My partnerships</b>	Do I have partnerships with Australian First Nations colleagues?
	Can I build partnerships with Australian First Nations colleagues?
	What values or commitments will form the foundation of my partnerships?

## Focusing on evaluation practices

This section of the Framework provides considerations for culturally safe evaluation practice for three core components of an evaluation process, as outlined in Figure 12, from the position of three key groups in the evaluation process.

- Commissioners, both Australian First Nations and non-Indigenous people.
- Evaluators, both Australian First Nations and non-Indigenous people.
- Australian First Nations people involved in the evaluation, particularly CEOs, Board Members, program managers and staff.

**FIGURE 12: THREE CORE COMPONENTS OF AN EVALUATION PROCESS**



We all need access to valuable tools such as this Framework. Every group we work with in evaluation is different from the last. There is no one right way to approach culturally safe evaluation, but this Framework will provide a very good steer in the right direction.

Kiri Parata, First Nations evaluator



## Culturally safe practices for planning

The **idea** of doing an evaluation is the first point at which cultural safety must be considered. The following critical self-reflection questions need to be asked at this very early stage of an evaluation or a potential evaluation as organisations decide whether to evaluate a policy, program or project and step into the process of commissioning the evaluation. For external evaluators, this includes deciding whether to apply for a tender and go through the application process.

Area	Critical self-reflection questions
<b>Considerations for commissioners</b>	Where did the idea to do an evaluation come from?
	Who has the most interest in the evaluation? Why are they interested?
	How will the evaluation be helpful? To whom will it be helpful?
	Who will be accountable for the evaluation?
	Are the timeframes and funds allocated sufficient to do the evaluation in a culturally safe manner? What advice have we sought about this?
	How prepared are we to adapt our preferred approach and plans to prioritise cultural respect and achieve better outcomes?
	What value do we place on engaging Australian First Nations led or co-led teams?
	What do we know about the historical and contemporary context of the First Nations community or organisation in which the evaluation is occurring? How do we plan for preventing re-traumatisation?
	How will we address intellectual and cultural property respectfully?
<b>Considerations for evaluators</b>	Where did the idea to do an evaluation come from?
	Who has the most interest in the evaluation? Why are they interested?
	How will the evaluation be helpful? To whom will it be helpful?
	What value do we place on Australian First Nations led or co-led teams?

*continued overleaf*

Area	Critical self-reflection questions
<b>Considerations for evaluators (continued)</b>	What opportunities can we create for Australian First Nations people to be involved in different roles on the team and within the evaluation?
	Are the timeframes and funds allocated sufficient to do the evaluation in a culturally safe manner? If there is not, how can we address this?
	What do we know about the historical and contemporary context of the First Nations community or organisation in which the evaluation is occurring?  How do we plan for preventing re-traumatisation?
	How are we involving the First Nations communities and/or organisations in designing the evaluation? Who will be involved? How will they be involved?  What culturally safe processes will we create to ensure equity of voice and decision-making?
	How will we ensure we respect the cultural authority of the First Nations community and/or organisation involved?
	<b>Considerations for Australian First Nations people involved in the evaluation</b>
Who has the most interest in the evaluation? Why are they interested?	
How will the evaluation be helpful? To whom will it be helpful?	
What choice do we have about the evaluation?	
Who are suitable people to undertake the evaluation?	
What do the commissioners and the evaluators need to recognise and respect about our community and/or organisation?	
What roles can we or do we want to play in the evaluation?	

## Culturally safe practices for designing, implementing and reporting

These critical self-reflection questions need to be considered from the first engagement as evaluators once and evaluation has been commissioned. Whether it is undertaken internally or externally, these matters will inform **all** aspects of undertaking the evaluation, from design through to implementation and reporting.

Several critical self-reflection questions for the planning component need to be retained and revisited when designing, implementing and reporting an evaluation, although new questions also emerge.

Area	Critical self-reflection questions
<b>Considerations for commissioners</b>	Are the timeframes and funds allocated sufficient to do the evaluation in a culturally safe manner? If there is not, how can we address this?
	How will we ensure we respect the cultural authority of the First Nations communities and/or organisations involved?
	How prepared are we to adapt our preferred approach and plans to prioritise cultural respect and achieve better outcomes?
	What forms of reporting will be meaningful for the First Nations communities and/or organisations involved?
<b>Considerations for evaluators</b>	What culturally safe processes will we create to ensure equity of voice and decision-making for Australian First Nations people on the team for every aspect of the evaluation process?
	What opportunities can we create for Australian First Nations people to be involved in different roles within the evaluation?
	Are the timeframes and funds allocated sufficient to do the evaluation in a culturally safe manner? If there is not, how can we address this?
	Who should we meet with? Who should we meet with first?
	How will we explore the potential benefits of the evaluation with First Nations communities and/or organisations?
	How will we advocate for adaptations that will enhance benefits for the First Nations communities and/or organisations involved?
	What do we know about the historical and contemporary context of the First Nations community or organisation in which the evaluation is occurring?  How do we plan for preventing re-traumatisation?

*continued overleaf*

Area	Critical self-reflection questions
<b>Considerations for evaluators (continued)</b>	How are we involving the First Nations communities and/or organisations in designing the evaluation? Who will be involved? How will they be involved?
	What culturally safe processes will we create to ensure equity of voice and decision-making with First Nations communities and/or organisations?
	Has sufficient time been allowed for the involvement and deliberation of all relevant people?
	How will we ensure we respect the cultural authority of the First Nations communities and/or organisations involved?
	How prepared are we to adapt our preferred approach and plans to prioritise cultural respect and achieve better outcomes?
	How will we address intellectual and cultural property respectfully?
	How will we ensure the interpretation of the findings accurately and fairly represents the voices of First Nations communities and/or organisations?
	What forms of reporting will be meaningful for the First Nations communities and/or organisations?
	How will we ensure reporting accurately and fairly represents the voices of First Nations communities and/or organisations?
<b>Considerations for Australian First Nations people involved in the evaluation</b>	What do the commissioners and the evaluators need to recognise and respect about our community and/or organisation?
	What roles can we or do we want to play in the evaluation?
	How and how often do we want evaluators to communicate with us?
	How will our cultural authority be recognised and respected?
	How will we be acknowledged in the evaluation?
	What are our expectations around intellectual and cultural property?
	What authority will we have over the interpretation of evaluation findings?
	What authority will we have over the reporting of outcomes?



## Culturally safe evaluation practices for translating the learnings

Evaluation learnings need to be translated into policy and/or practice once the reporting process is complete. Translation may result in a variety of outcomes. These include but are not limited to ongoing or increased funding for existing programs, funding for new programs, redesign of policy positions, redesign of funding contracts, continuation of good practice, improvement in practice, discontinuation of poor or ineffective practice.

Area	Critical self-reflection questions
<b>Considerations for commissioners</b>	What will we do with the evaluation learnings and recommendations?
	How will we respond if the evaluation learnings and recommendations are different from what we anticipated?
	How will we advocate for the changes recommended through the evaluation?
	How will we be accountable to the First Nations communities and/or organisations who were involved in the evaluation?
<b>Considerations for evaluators</b>	What plans have we made in the evaluation process to support translation of the learnings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ with commissioners?</li> <li>→ with First Nations communities and/or organisations who were involved in the evaluation?</li> <li>→ with non-Indigenous organisations who receive funding for services and programs for First Nations peoples?</li> </ul>
	How will we advocate for the changes recommended through the evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ with commissioners?</li> <li>→ with First Nations communities and/or organisations who were involved in the evaluation?</li> <li>→ with non-Indigenous organisations who receive funding for services and programs for First Nations peoples?</li> </ul>
	What steps have we taken to prepare First Nations staff, programs, communities and/or organisations for situations where recommendations could be dismissed or decisions about their implementation delayed?
<b>Considerations for Australian First Nations people involved in the evaluation</b>	What requests have we made for supporting the translation of the learnings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ with commissioners?</li> <li>→ with our communities and/or organisations who were involved in the evaluation?</li> <li>→ with non-Indigenous organisations who receive funding for services and programs for First Nations peoples?</li> </ul>
	What support and resources have we been provided or offered to translate the learnings?

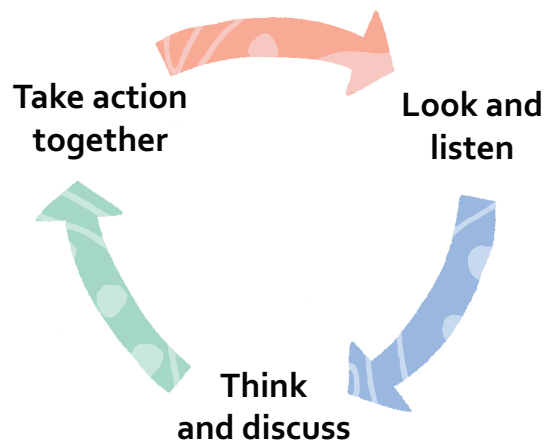
# Shaping a different future for evaluation

## What will help me implement the Framework?

The critical self-reflection questions for each focus area provide an opportunity to identify what you can do now to better equip yourself to undertake culturally safe evaluations. As described earlier, working toward culturally safe evaluation is an ongoing commitment and journey. This can be considered through a familiar approach, such as participatory action research.

Stringer and Aragon (2021) describe the three main steps in a basic AR routine as: **look, think and act**.

Below is an adapted version of this routine that was developed by the Gilles Plains Aboriginal Women's Reference Group, who were co-researchers in a project led by a white researcher, Janet Kelly for her PhD thesis (Kelly 2008).



The reasons for changing the language were to slow Janet down and ensure she was mindful of how she included the women's voices, so she fostered a collective approach that was reflective of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.

In this spirit of a collective and recursive approach, the following steps can assist you to plan what you can do to implement the Framework, strengthen your capacity for culturally safe evaluation and, for non-Indigenous people, progress your journey as an ally:

1. Review your responses to the questions for each focus areas.
2. Where were you comfortable and familiar with what was being addressed?

3. Where were you stretched and less familiar with what was being addressed?
4. Identify areas for your further personal and professional development.
5. Seek out colleagues and friends who also want to be allies as non-Indigenous people – discuss how you can support each other in your journey.
6. Identify resources and opportunities that will assist you on your journey – take note of the actions that the AES takes to support members and the ‘Useful resources’ section of the Framework as an initial starting point.
7. Over time, remember to revisit the questions in the focus areas, review how you are travelling and identify your next steps on your journey.

Evaluators that learn about culturally safe practice and engage with us in a meaningful way will have better access to our perspectives and experiences, and achieve more comprehensive results in their evaluations.

Tony Kiessler, Australian First Nations evaluator

## How can the AES support Framework implementation?


The AES has a commitment to strengthen and build First Nation peoples’ evaluation capacity in culturally safe evaluation theory, practice and use. The AES Cultural Safety Framework contributes to realising this commitment and opens other opportunities for action that will support implementation of the Framework. These include:

1. Provide learning and development seminars on the AES Cultural Safety Framework.
2. Review and refresh the AES *Code of Ethics* (2013a) to align with the AES Cultural Safety Framework.
3. Review and refresh the AES *Evaluators Professional Learning Competency Framework* (2013b) to align with the AES Cultural Safety Framework.
4. Review and refresh the AES *Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations* (2013c) to align with the AES Cultural Safety Framework.
5. Identify if and how the Framework influences how the AES Reconciliation Action Plan is implemented.
6. Identify and promote cultural safety professional development activities available nationally and/or in different jurisdictions.
7. Identify and support opportunities for profiling and sharing culturally safe evaluation practices across the evaluation field.
8. Develop and implement an evaluation strategy to assess the Framework’s impact over the next five years, and present progress and outcomes at AES conferences.

## What could change if the Framework is fully implemented?

Full implementation of the Framework through the combined efforts of individuals and the profession, led by the AES, could make a substantial difference in the approach to and experience of evaluation by Australian First Nations colleagues, organisations, communities and participants. This will complement other developments in government-led evaluation (Productivity Commission 2020a, 2020b) and the existing efforts of Australian First Nations evaluators and non-Indigenous allies.

The changes and possible outcomes that could be achieved are outlined in Figure 13. Collectively, they can guide the strategies for striving towards strengthening culturally safe evaluation in Australia and provide indicators for assessing our shared journey towards this goal.




I'm proud and excited that the AES has shown leadership by developing this important piece of work – a tool to guide, support and educate. If it leads to discussions amongst the evaluation community about how best to approach working with First Nations peoples and encourages reflection and consideration about our place in this work, it is meaningfully doing an important job.

Kiri Parata, First Nations evaluator

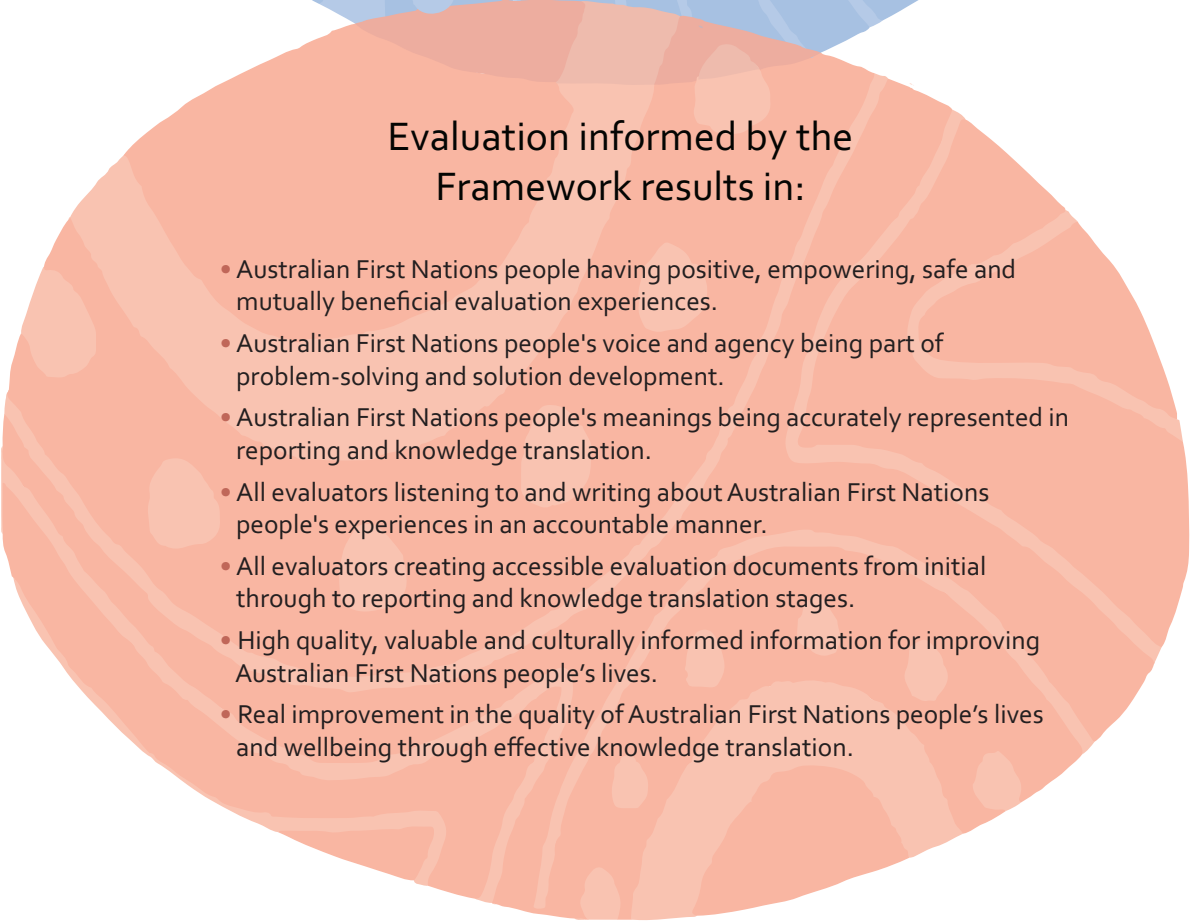
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**FIGURE 13: WHAT COULD CHANGE IF THE FRAMEWORK IS FULLY IMPLEMENTED?**



### If the Framework is adopted across the profession, then:

- All AES documents are revised to align with the Framework.
- The AES identifies and promotes cultural safety professional development activities.
- Evaluators are advocates for culturally safe practice.
- Evaluators are better equipped to design and implement culturally safe evaluations.
- Culturally safe approaches are accepted as legitimate and credible ways of doing good evaluation.
- Evaluation in Australian First Nations contexts is First Nations-led.
- The Framework guides decisions in evaluation commissioning.
- Adherence to the Framework is built into evaluation contracts.



### Evaluation informed by the Framework results in:

- Australian First Nations people having positive, empowering, safe and mutually beneficial evaluation experiences.
- Australian First Nations people's voice and agency being part of problem-solving and solution development.
- Australian First Nations people's meanings being accurately represented in reporting and knowledge translation.
- All evaluators listening to and writing about Australian First Nations people's experiences in an accountable manner.
- All evaluators creating accessible evaluation documents from initial through to reporting and knowledge translation stages.
- High quality, valuable and culturally informed information for improving Australian First Nations people's lives.
- Real improvement in the quality of Australian First Nations people's lives and wellbeing through effective knowledge translation.



## Useful resources

The following resources are not intended to be comprehensive. They are indicative of currently available and publicly accessible resources that are consistent with the focus of the Framework and can support its implementation. In almost all instances, the authors are Australian First Nations people or working in a First Nations/non-Indigenous partnership.

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Bower, M, Malla, C, Manhire, S & Rogers, A 2015, *A cultural protocol for evaluation: a guide for the Indigenous Australia Program team and external consultants to support and encourage good practice*, Fred Hollows Foundation, Sydney, viewed 25 February 2021, <<https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/Cultural%20Framework%20Eval%20FINAL%20WEB%2021-1-16.pdf>>.

This outlines the Fred Hollows Foundation's development and application of a cultural protocol for undertaking evaluations in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts, whether they lead or commission them. As described by (Rogers & Bower et al. (2017), its purpose is 'to provide guidance for staff and evaluators in order to ensure that evaluation-related activities are undertaken with the appropriate respect for, and participation of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities' (p. 13).

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Cargo, M, Potaka-Osborne, G, Cvitanovic, L, Warner, L, Clarke, S, Judd, J, Chakraborty, A & Boulton, A 2019, 'Strategies to support culturally safe health and wellbeing evaluations in Indigenous settings in Australia and New Zealand: a concept mapping study', *International Journal for Equity in Health*, vol. 18, no. 194, pp. 1–17, viewed 28 February 2021, <<https://equityhealthj.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12939-019-1094-z>>.

This was an Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaborative research project with wide participation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in both Australia and New Zealand to explore and identify the strategies that contribute to culturally safe health and wellbeing focused evaluations in each country. Separate strategy maps are developed that illustrate shared as well as unique strategies, as well as differences in language that fit in each context. It provides guidance for the commissioning and conduct of evaluations in Indigenous contexts and is published in an open access journal. It is congruent with the AES Cultural Safety Framework.

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CBPATSISP no date, *CBPATSISP Evaluation framework*, viewed 28 August 2020, <<https://cbpatsisp.com.au/clearing-house/best-practice-evaluation/#bpevaluationframework>>.

This is a web-based resource guide that includes a set of principles and standards to review or evaluate existing programs and services focused on suicide prevention. It provides a practical planning and evaluation tool for communities and organisations to apply in their work in suicide prevention and for professional practitioners, program and service providers working in suicide prevention, interventions and clinical services. It is also used to formally assess the relevance, acceptability, effectiveness and culturally appropriateness of existing suicide prevention and early intervention initiatives, programs and services in Indigenous communities in Australia for inclusion on the CBPATSISP Clearinghouse Best Practice Programs and Services, and Resources

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Dudgeon, P, Bray, A, Darlaston-Jones, D & Walker, R 2020, *Aboriginal Participatory Action Research: an Indigenous research methodology strengthening decolonisation and social and emotional wellbeing*, Discussion paper, Lowitja Institute, Melbourne, viewed 17 February 2021, <[https://www.lowitja.org.au/content/Document/Lowitja-Publishing/LI\\_Discussion\\_Paper\\_P-Dudgeon\\_FINAL3.pdf](https://www.lowitja.org.au/content/Document/Lowitja-Publishing/LI_Discussion_Paper_P-Dudgeon_FINAL3.pdf)>.

This discussion paper describes and recognises the significance of Aboriginal Participatory Action Research (APAR). It outlines how participatory action research had an Indigenous foundation and assists researchers and evaluators to consider the decolonisation work that is necessary for engaging in APAR methodologies – which is equivalent to critical self-reflection as described here in the AES Cultural Safety Framework.

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Dreise, T and Mazurski, E 2018, *Weaving knowledges. Knowledge exchange, co-design and community-based participatory research and evaluation in Aboriginal communities: literature review, case study and practical tips*, NSW Government, Sydney, viewed 1 March 2021, <<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2563242480/view>>.

This resource has three sections. Part A is a literature review on co-design and community-based participatory research or evaluation. Part B is a case study of co-designing the OCHRE evaluation (based on the point reached by 2018). Part 3 has some practical tips for how communities and researchers/evaluators can co-design evaluation and its implementation in meaningful and useful ways for Australian First Nations contexts in which it is occurring.

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Fogarty W, Lovell M, Langenberg J & Heron M-J 2018, *Deficit discourse and strengths-based approaches: changing the narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing*, The Lowitja Institute, Melbourne, viewed 26 September 2020 <<https://www.lowitja.org.au/page/services/resources/Cultural-and-social-determinants/racism/deficit-discourse-strengths-based>>.

This document was part of a larger research project on changing discourse in research and evaluation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing contexts, providing examples of strengths-based approaches that can be used (see the table on page 15) and profiling a range of programs designed from a strengths-based position, that can then be evaluated from a strengths-based position.

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Gibb, B, Babyack, S, Stephens, D, Kelleher, K, Hoger, D, Vale, C, Peersman, G 2019a, *Good evaluation practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings: code of conduct for the BetterEvaluation team*, Working Document – Version 1, BetterEvaluation, Melbourne, August 2019, viewed 21 August 2020, <[https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/BetterEval\\_IndEval\\_CodeOfConduct\\_v1\\_June2019.pdf](https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/BetterEval_IndEval_CodeOfConduct_v1_June2019.pdf)>.

BetterEvaluation developed this resource to outline the Code of Conduct that is specific to how information about evaluation activity by or with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations is presented and shared on their website.

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Gibb, B, Babyack, S, Stephens, D, Kelleher, K, Hoger, D, Vale, C, Peersman, G 2019b, *Putting ethical principles into practice: a protocol to support ethical evaluation practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings*, Working Document – Version 1, BetterEvaluation, Melbourne, August 2019, viewed 21 August 2020, <[https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/BetterEval\\_IndEval\\_Ethical\\_Protocol\\_v1\\_Aug2019.pdf](https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/BetterEval_IndEval_Ethical_Protocol_v1_Aug2019.pdf)>.

This BetterEvaluation resource is an ethical protocol that is described as a companion document to the Australian Evaluation Society Code of Ethics (AES, 2013a). Its purpose is 'to promote the full implementation of ethical principles when engaging in monitoring and evaluation activities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the aim to support M&E practices that respect the rights of, and function for the benefit of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' (p. 2). The protocol is based on six equally important themes, each with one or more principles. The document names and acknowledges a range of barriers to ethical practice and describes the types of evaluation practices associated with each principle for each theme.

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Gollan, S & Stacey, K 2021a, *Cultural safety audit tool for individuals*, Lowitja Institute, Melbourne. Contact the Lowitja Institute for further information, including costs to purchase: <<https://www.lowitja.org.au/>>.

This audit tool is designed to assess an individual's level of development in understanding critical elements of cultural safety and working towards creating culturally safe experiences for Australian First Nations peoples. It can be used by both non-Indigenous and First Nations people working in a broad range of organisations, including but not limited to health, higher education, research, human services or policy contexts. Individual staff can complete it as a self-assessment, although it is possible for individuals to be assessed by another person. A specific application within organisational contexts is as part of annual performance reviews, where staff can reflect on their progress with their line manager and identify personal and professional development goals for the subsequent year.

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Gollan, S & Stacey, K 2021b, *Cultural safety audit tool for organisations*, Lowitja Institute, Melbourne. Contact the Lowitja Institute for further information, including costs to purchase: <<https://www.lowitja.org.au/>>.

This audit tool is designed for whole of organisation use to assess the commitment to and level of development in embedding cultural safety across an organisation according to eight core focus areas for all organisations and an addition two focus areas for higher education contexts. It can be done in two ways – as a self-assessment conducted by staff or by external stakeholders, or through a combined group of staff and external stakeholders (the latter is the recommended approach). It is designed to be repeated on a regular basis, such as every six or twelve months, to track an organisation's progress with embedding cultural safety and to guide ongoing planning and strategy implementation.

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Hardy, KV 2016, 'Anti-racist approaches for shaping theoretical and practice paradigms', in M Pender-Greene & A Siskin (eds), *Anti-racist strategies for the health and human services*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Dr Ken Hardy is a psychologist and African-American man that has been very active in addressing the wider health and human services field on anti-racism strategies. The material included in the AES Cultural Safety Framework came from this chapter. If you Google Dr Ken Hardy, you will find several YouTube clips where he speaks about anti-racism practice and how the different impact this can have in the lives of people of colour.

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Kelaher, M, Luke, J, Ferdinand, A, Chamravi, D, Ewen, S & Paradies, Y 2018a, *An evaluation framework to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health*, The Lowitja Institute, Melbourne, viewed 28 February 2021, <<https://www.lowitja.org.au/page/services/resources/health-services-and-workforce/service-solutions/Evaluation-Framework>>.

Kelaher, M, Luke, J, Ferdinand, A, Chamravi, D, Ewen, S & Paradies, Y 2018b, *An evaluation framework to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health: users guide*, The Lowitja Institute, Melbourne, viewed 28 February 2021, <<https://www.lowitja.org.au/content/Document/Lowitja-Publishing/Evaluation-Framework-Users-Guide-2018-October.pdf>>.

This framework for evaluation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health contexts was the outcome of a research project that sought out and profiled examples of good practice. Its purpose is 'to provide an evaluation framework that would result in improving the benefits of evaluation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' (p. vii), this includes effective knowledge translation and positive research impact. The first listed document (2018a) is the research project report. The second listed document (2018b) is the Users Guide that includes the core material for application from the research project and provides advice on how to use it.

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Productivity Commission 2020a, *A guide to evaluation under the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, viewed 2 March 2021, <<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/indigenous-evaluation/strategy/indigenous-evaluation-guide.pdf>>.

The evaluation guide to the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy offers practical advice on the evaluation of both Indigenous-specific and mainstream programs and services in Indigenous contexts. It is written like a resource or 'primer' for staff of government departments on different aspects of evaluation, including theory and approaches through to planning, implementation and reporting.

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Productivity Commission 2020b, *Indigenous Evaluation Strategy*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, viewed 2 March 2021, <<https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/indigenous-evaluation/strategy/indigenous-evaluation-strategy.pdf>>.

The purpose of this Indigenous Evaluation Strategy is 'to provide a whole-of-government framework for Australian Government agencies to use when selecting, planning, conducting and using evaluations of policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' (p. 1). While it is primarily directed at staff of government departments to enhance their evaluative thinking across a range of activities, including commissioning evaluation, it does have broader relevance in the evaluation community and services sector. It calls for credible, useful, ethical and transparent evaluation of Indigenous programs and services. It addresses: what to evaluate; how to plan design and conduct evaluations; how to report evaluation findings; and building evaluator capabilities for incorporating Indigenous knowledges into their thinking and practice, and strengthening evaluation capability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities.

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Rix EF, Barclay L & Wilson S 2014, 'Can a white nurse get it? 'Reflexive practice' and the non-indigenous clinician/researcher working with Aboriginal people', *Rural Remote Health*, vol. 14, no. 2, viewed 7 February 2021, <<https://www.rrh.org.au/journal/article/2679>>.

This paper provides a good example of applying critical self-reflection or reflexivity to one's practice when undertaking research or evaluation alongside Australian First Nations peoples. The author openly shares their learning journey through the application of reflexive practice and outlines a model of multi-layered reflexive practice as a method of research or evaluation practice (see Figure 2 on page 10). It is published in an open access journal.

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Stacey, K & Gollan, S 2021, *Cultural safety initiative planning and evaluation template*, Lowitja Institute, Melbourne. Contact the Lowitja Institute for further information, including costs to purchase: <<https://www.lowitja.org.au/>>.

This template is a set of customisable documents across four elements of the planning and evaluation cycle that is designed to: provide direction on what to include in an organisational cultural safety initiative, streamline an organisation's work in planning an organisational cultural safety initiative, and guide how to evaluate progress and achievements of the initiative over time. It is informed by four sets of knowledges, which are integrated to support organisations to achieve better outcomes from their cultural safety initiative: planning, cultural safety, organisational cultural change and evaluation.

If all four elements of the template are used, an organisation will create: 1) a cultural safety initiative plan to guide their work over a three-year period, 2) a program logic poster that illustrates their initiative in one page, 3) an evaluation strategy so they can monitor their progress over the organisational cultural change initiative, and 4) several customised evaluation tools for implementing the evaluation strategy.

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Williams, M 2018, 'Ngaabi-nya Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program evaluation framework', *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 6–20, viewed 15 September 2020, <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1035719X18760141>>.

As explained in the paper abstract, the Ngaabi-nya framework is:

'a practical guide for the evaluation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and social programs. It has a range of prompts to stimulate thinking about critical success factors in programs relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's lives. Ngaabi-nya was designed from an Aboriginal practitioner-scholar standpoint and was informed by the holistic concept of Aboriginal health, case studies with Aboriginal-led social and emotional well-being programs, human rights instruments, and the work of Stufflebeam ...

Ngaabi-nya is one of the few tools developed specifically to reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' contexts. It prompts the user to take into account the historical, policy, and social landscape of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's lives, existing and emerging cultural leadership, and informal caregiving that supports programs. Ngaabi-nya's prompts across four domains – landscape factors, resources, ways of working, and learnings – provide a structure through which to generate insights necessary for the future development of culturally relevant, effective, translatable, and sustainable programs required for Australia's growing and diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations' (p. 6).



## Glossary of key terms

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<b>Critical consciousness</b>	This is an alternative term for critical self-reflection.
<b>Critical self-reflection</b>	Critical self-reflection, reflexivity or reflexive practice enables us to recognise the existence and impact of power and privilege on our self, our interpersonal relationships and our social positioning. Rix, Barclay and Wilson (2014) provide this definition: 'a multilayered and sustained critical reflection on the conscious and unconscious beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, motivations and actions influencing myself as a researcher. "Self" reflexivity explores my biases and identifies what I bring to the study from past experience. "Interpersonal" reflexivity examines my interactions with participants, exploring power imbalances and the learning that occurs within relationships. "System" reflexivity scrutinises and reflects on institutional policy and practice that negatively influences the experiences of Aboriginal participants in the study.' (pp. 2–3)
<b>Cultural racism</b>	A form of racism expressed as a set of ideas based on social myths about other racial or ethnic groups, including First Nations peoples. This forms a narrative that repeated and reinforced at a socio-cultural level through many parts of our lives, including through families, schooling and in the media. It devalues and blames First Nations peoples for differences from dominant culture values and practices (Pettman & Chambers 1996; Vasta & Castles 1998).
<b>Cultural safety</b>	Cultural safety is an experience determined by First Nations peoples when they are in situations where their presence is welcomed and respected, their experiences are believed and validated, their cultures are centred and valued, their knowledges and skills are recognised and supported, their advice is listened to and acted upon, and they do not experience racism in any form.
<b>Dominant culture</b>	The set of values, beliefs, standards and systems that are considered the 'norm' and govern and organise every aspect of our lives in Australia.
<b>First Nations</b>	This term is being increasingly used in Australia to refer to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the many nations of culturally diverse peoples who resided in what we now call Australia for at least 70,000 years prior to invasion and colonisation by the British commencing in 1788. It is also a term being used in a global context for indigenous peoples who have experienced colonisation.
<b>Individual racism</b>	When individuals engage in racial prejudice and racial discrimination against Australian First Nations people or members of other particular racial or cultural groups.

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<b>Institutional racism</b>	'Institutionalised racism is different from the repressive laws of the past that served overtly to oppress marginalised peoples. For Aboriginal people in Australia there is ample evidence of active oppression in past government legislation and practices that controlled people's lives. In contemporary times, however, institutionalised racism persists in the institutions and systems that exclude and discriminate against Aboriginal people. In contemporary times, society's institutions have the power to develop, sustain and enforce specific racialised views of people. The way that a society's economic, justice, educational and health care systems are applied can disadvantage certain groups of people when these systems do not cater for, or consider the cultural values or marginalisation of, members of those groups and thereby become forms of institutionalised racism. Institutional racism is embedded in these systems.' (Dudgeon, Wright, Paradies, Garvey & Walker 2014, p. 16).
<b>Intergenerational trauma</b>	This occurs when trauma is transmitted from one generation to the next. Australian First Nations people have a history of being systematically oppressed. This experience of historical trauma becomes accumulative and has psychological and physical effects that become repeated across generations through both epigenetic and socio-cultural means, which is exacerbated through contemporary experiences of trauma due to ongoing racism (Atkinson 2002, 2013; Atkinson et al. 2014).
<b>Knowledge translation</b>	The series of interactions and communication with people who can use and/or benefit from research evidence and evaluation outcomes to connect research or evaluation outcomes to making needed changes in policy, programs and practice.
<b>Non-Indigenous</b>	This term refers to people living in Australia, whether born in Australia or born overseas, who are not Australian First Nations people.
<b>Racial prejudice</b>	Attitudes expressed, whether in thinking or speech, towards people classified on the basis of their physical or cultural characteristics. Once identified as members of a particular racial or cultural group, people are judged according to presumed characteristics (Pettman & Chambers 1996; Vasta & Castles 1998).
<b>Racial discrimination</b>	Behaviour, whether it is overt or covert or intended or unintended, which disadvantages people who are identified on the basis of their real or assumed membership of a racial or cultural group (Pettman & Chambers 1996; Vasta & Castles 1998).
<b>Research impact</b>	The positive and sustainable long-term benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which is gained from research or evaluation outside of any academic benefits for individual researchers, evaluators and research or evaluation organisations

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