

Strengths-based recognition of cultures, acknowledging communities and individuals

Attribution principle

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities have the right to choose to be acknowledged and attributed for their contributions to an evaluation.

Application

- All work must be attributed to the original author and or knowledge custodian. This demonstrates respect for the author and shares with them how their work is being used by others. It also ensures they are happy for their work to be used in this way.
- Draft a copy of the attribution to check with the community member(s) to ensure it is correct and appropriate.

Strengths-based principle

Affirm and celebrate culture. Take a strength based approach and build from cultural strengths.

Application

- Strengths-based works are key elements of creating meaningful change. In a strengths-based approach, it is important to understand what has worked, but it is also important to take the time to understand what could have worked better.
- Building on strengths-based practices is a key element of creating positive images of Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander contributions, communities and peoples.
- A strengths-based approach does not preclude issues or problems but rather facilitates successful negotiation to establish strong dialogue within and with communities.

Strengthening of culture principle

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are not static and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to protect, maintain, revitalise and strengthen their cultures.

Application

- Be respectful of cultural protocols acknowledging that each community has different protocols - ask what the protocols are.
- Undertake cultural training if offered by the community, before commencing the evaluation. If there is no specific cultural training available for the community, undertake a cultural training that has the flexibility and sensitivity to be applied in multiple contexts.

Participation principle

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are evaluators and should be regarded as equal partners.

Application

Include community members in the design of program theory and logic models and the testing of existing models. Community perception and expertise is required to fully develop and understand the effectiveness of models. Ensure the models are communicated in a way that is meaningful to community members. You may be required to translate the model into something more appropriate for the community setting.

Remain open in your evaluation to identify the unintended outcomes (positive and negative) and ensure that community members have the space to comment on elements of a program evaluation that you may consider 'out of scope'. You may not see the direct correlation, but take the time to listen as community members may be seeing something that you have missed. Communities have a holistic approach to well-being and that can present in unexpected forms.

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