

## Conception

**Cultural Continuity:** Cultural continuity contributes to a sense of strong, shared and enduring individual and collective identities. Cultural continuity includes maintaining the bonds and relationships between people and between people and their environment. It also includes responsibilities in respect of spiritual domains. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples continue to preserve their cultures and identity by reflecting on and drawing strength from their individual and collective identities (NHMRC Ethical Guidelines)

- Consult with Aboriginal communities to ensure that the research is an issue and/ or priority as determined by that community. (Communities are not always geographically based, and can include non-discrete or disperse groups)
- Seek written consent from and develop formal written agreements with participating Aboriginal Communities/ Aboriginal Community Control Health Services or establish an Aboriginal Reference Group. Aboriginal Governance must be to the proportion of the study.
- Discuss with either your research team, Aboriginal researchers, community involved whether an Aboriginal Reference Group is needed.
- Where possible employ Aboriginal Researchers to be a part of or lead the project.
- Employ Aboriginal people and where ever possible, plan for training and development opportunities. An emphasis should be placed on employing local Aboriginal people.

## Design

**Equity:** Equity is reflected by a commitment to showing fairness and justice that enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' culture, history and status to be appreciated and respected.<sup>4</sup> Many instance of discrimination and marginalisation have resulted in multiple inequities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities. In research, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have perceived the distribution of benefits from research as flowing mostly to the researchers and research institutions. (NHMRC Ethical Guidelines)

Co-design your research project with participating Aboriginal Communities, ensuring that varying cultural protocols and processes are being considered and adhered to ("Community" is recognised as a complex notion incorporating cultural groups, geographic groups or groups and organisations sharing common interests.

- Co-design or provide the following to the ACCHS/ARG; the research protocol, questionnaires, surveys, recruitment posters, budgets, terms of reference and other necessary documents.
- Develop terms of reference for the Aboriginal Reference Group, finalise membership and terms of reference.
- The community must have an opportunity to review these documents and provide changes.
- Work with community to ensure the readability of all public facing documents, this will assist with ensuring that it is culturally appropriate and will be understandable to participants.
- Plan to meet with community at regular intervals, outline this in the research agreement, protocol or terms of reference.
- Plan how participants or participating organisations will be reimbursed for their time.

## Conduct

**Reciprocity:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' way of shared responsibility and obligation is based on their kinship networks. This process keeps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ways of living and family relationships strong. These responsibilities also extend to caring for country, which includes the land, sea, waterways, animals, biodiversity and ecosystems and involves sharing benefits from the land, sea and waterways; redistribution of resources; and sharing food and housing. Reciprocity should enable agreements where all groups or people have equal rights and power in relationships, although in the context of research this often involves unequal power relationships. Reciprocity recognises all partners' contributions, and ensures the benefits from research outcomes. (NHMRC Ethical Guidelines)

Meet with the ACCHS/ ARG at regular intervals to ensure that the project is on track.

- Listen to and adjust the project if the community requests or as needed. The participating communities must agree to these changes.
- Reimburse participants and members of the ARG for their time.
- Submit amendments to AH&MRC HREC for approval prior to the changes taking affect.
- Report annually to the AH&MRC HREC.



## Reporting

**Respect:** is expressed as having regard for the welfare, rights, knowledge, skills, beliefs, perceptions, customs and cultural heritage (both individual and collective) of people involved in research. Within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, respect is reinforced through, and in turn strengthens, dignity. A respectful relationship promotes trust and co-operation. (NHMRC Ethical Guidelines)

- Include ACCHS/ARG in the interpretation of findings where possible and practical for the ACCHS/ARG.
- Draft the final report in collaboration with the ACCHS/ ARG.
- Include Aboriginal researchers, ACCHS/ ARG as authors on publication



## Dissemination

**Responsibility:** Central to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies and cultures is the recognition of core responsibilities. These responsibilities include caring for country, kinship bonds, caring for others and the maintenance of harmony and balance within and between the physical and spiritual realms. A key responsibility within this framework is to do no harm, including avoiding having an adverse impact on the ability of others to comply with their responsibilities. Also, an individual's responsibilities are not limited to them alone and may relate to the accountability of others. Responsibilities may be shared with others so that as a group they will also be held accountable. (NHMRC Ethical Guidelines)

- Circulate findings back to the community that is involved in the research.
- Highlight achievements of the community and of the research.
- Present practical next steps to the communities affected by the research. This may be for the community to help overcome the health issue, or to improve policy or practices.