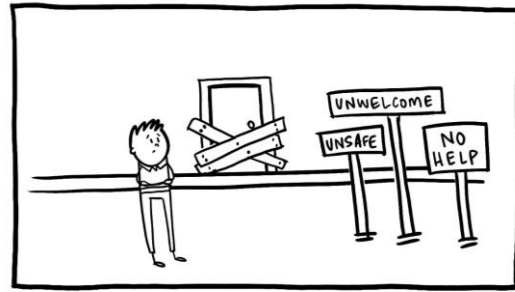


Discussion Topic 2



Removing the barriers to accessing services

If services are to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of the community it is important to understand who isn't accessing services and why this is the case. A barrier may be real; the service does not offer what people want or need so people don't use the service. Alternatively, a barrier may be perceived, the service offers what people want or need, but people think it doesn't and therefore do not use the service. These barriers would be addressed differently, but both need to be addressed because the outcome is the same – people won't use the service.

When discussing barriers and how to remove them it is important to be aware of our own cultural norms and practices and see things from the perspective of the diverse community. The following may help with your discussion.

Reflective questions

- What do you think could be some of the barriers people or communities face in accessing our service?
- What barriers are real (they do exist) and what barriers are perceived (we don't think they exist, but the community does)?

Some prompts for the discussion could include affordability, cultural safety, unfriendly staff, services don't fit interest/wants, people unaware what support is needed

- How have we tried to remove barriers to accessing services in the past?

Prompt could include, fees policy, open days, working with community organisations, marketing or communication

- How do we find out why people are not using our service?
- What steps can we take to remove or reduce the barriers people face in accessing our service?