

Addressing Diversity and Wellness in the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

Standard 2 – The Organisation

Introduction

The following case studies were developed as part of a webinar series that explores the need to address diversity and wellness within the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards. These case studies provide good practice approaches to specific situations, highlight the breadth of diversity within each person and the need for inclusive and person-centred practice to be embedded throughout the organisation.

Reflective questions have been developed to support service providers discuss the issues raised in the case studies with their staff and volunteers, at team meetings or as part of individual learning.

Diversity

Diversity exists within all of us, shaped by our identities, values, experiences, and what is important to us. People's identities are multifaceted, encompassing various aspects like gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, religion and ability. Therefore, aged care services must be developed and delivered to fit each client, considering all aspects of their diverse backgrounds and what is important to them.

Wellness

A wellness approach is an ongoing, holistic method of service delivery that supports individuals in reaching their goals. It promotes independence and autonomy by building on people's strengths and encouraging active participation in their care. This approach involves flexible and timely assessment, planning, and service delivery that reduces the risks of living at home and promotes independence. A wellness approach is intrinsically linked to person-centred care, as it emphasises enabling choice and empowering people with information and strategies so they can make their own decisions. This method ensures that care is tailored to the individual, enhancing their quality of life and promoting a sense of dignity and respect.

Intersectionality

Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the term intersectionality to highlight how systems and structures of privilege and discrimination affect people differently, depending on how aspects of their identity, such as race, gender, age, or sexual orientation overlap and interact. These experiences are not caused by a person's identity itself, but by the way societal systems (including the aged care system) respond to and treat those identities. Applying an intersectional lens to the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards means going beyond acknowledging a client's diversity to actively identifying and addressing systemic barriers and power imbalances. This approach focuses on tailored communication, cultural competence, and policies that treat everyone with dignity, creating a more supportive, accessible, and inclusive environment for all."

Although funding for this resource has been provided by the Australian Government, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government.

Standard 2 – The Organisation

The strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards place significant emphasis on the role of the organisation in fostering a culture of safety, inclusion and quality. Standard 2 focuses on the governance and management systems required to deliver high-quality care and services. This standard mandates that organisations set strategic priorities that promote a culture of continuous improvement, accountability and partnership with older people. By actively involving older people, their families and carers in the decision-making processes, the organisation ensures that care services are responsive to the diverse needs and preferences of their clients. This approach aligns with good diversity and wellness practices by creating an inclusive environment where every individual's unique background and experiences are respected and valued. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of supporting a competent and caring workforce that is supported to deliver person-centred care.

There are ten outcomes listed under Standard 2.

2.1: Partnering with older people
2.2: Quality and safety culture
2.3: Accountability and quality system
2.4: Risk management
2.5: Incident management
2.6: Feedback and complaints management
2.7: Information management
2.8: Workforce planning
2.9: Human resource management
2.10: Emergency and disaster management



Image Source: strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards: <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/provider-quality-standards/strengthened-quality-standards>

Further information

Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standard 2: The Organisation:

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resource-library/standard-2-organisation>

Draft provider guidance Standard 2:

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resource-library/draft-provider-guidance-standard-2>



Case Study 2A – Brightside

Read and review the case studies for Standard 2 and consider which outcomes are addressed, highlight the good practice you identify.

Case Study 2A

Miguel is a HR Manager working at a small regional Community Health Service, Brightside. As he walks out of a meeting room, he collides with Angela’s walker as she is moving quickly around a sharp corner. Angela is attending the strength and exercise classes at Brightside to build her confidence and regain mobility. Another worker walking past reacts quickly and catches Angela, so she doesn’t fall. Miguel quickly untangles himself from the walker and another person coming down the hallway stops in time to avoid a further collision.

Shaun is running the strength and exercise class, upon hearing the commotion, he comes around the corner to check on everyone making sure they are ok. He takes the clients out of the hallway into the small room where some other people are on treadmills. When Miguel returns to the office, he begins to fill out an incident report. He has seen the exercise class using the hallway each week and thought it didn’t seem right, but as it’s not his area of expertise he didn’t say anything. While initially reluctant to lodge an incident report, he knows the organisation is more concerned with safety than blame.

Annette, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Officer speaks with Miguel, Shaun and the people involved individually. Shaun advised the air conditioner in the hall doesn’t work so he used the hallway in the main building to keep the clients comfortable. He hadn’t asked to have it fixed because it’s been broken for so long and he’s always hearing that money needs to be saved. Annette conducts a full review of the program and completes a risk assessment with Shaun. Annette recommends the Executive replace the air conditioner as using the hallway for exercise activities presents a significant risk to clients and staff. The Executive accepted her recommendation, agreeing it would make for a better experience for the clients and it would be safer. Communication is sent to the Directors and Program Managers reinforcing the need to place client safety as the top priority including the obligation to report all hazards.

Moving into a larger space, Shaun takes the opportunity to work with the clients and refresh the program. The clients say they want to bring more fun to their exercises incorporating music and games-based activities. At the next quarterly review Shaun measures client outcomes and engagement scores which have improved significantly.



Reflective Activity

Reflect on the case study and answer the following questions:

1. How are the specific outcomes of Standard 2 achieved through the actions taken by Brightside's staff and management?

2. Reflect on Shaun's engagement with clients in redesigning the exercise program and the impact this had on their engagement and satisfaction. How does this demonstrate the principles of partnering with older people (Outcome 2.1)?

3. In what ways does Brightside's approach to incident management and risk assessment reflect a commitment to a quality and safety culture (Outcomes 2.2 and 2.5)?

4. How does this case study exemplify person-centred practice, and what are the benefits of incorporating client feedback into program improvements (Outcome 2.6)?



Reflections summary

The incident at Brightside highlights how effective safety management, client engagement, and quality improvement processes align with the requirements of Standard 2. By addressing the incident through a structured approach, the organisation demonstrates its commitment to partnering with older people, maintaining a quality and safety culture and implementing robust risk management practices.

2.1 Partnering with Older People

Shaun's efforts to refresh the exercise program based on client feedback illustrates meaningful engagement with older people. Involving clients in program improvements demonstrates respect for their preferences and contributions, fostering a sense of ownership and satisfaction reflecting the expectation of partnering with older people in care delivery and governance.

2.2 Quality and Safety Culture

The governing body's decision to replace the air conditioner and prioritise client safety highlights a strong commitment to a culture of safety, inclusion, and continuous improvement. Emphasising safety over blame and encouraging incident reporting are crucial elements of a psychologically safe work environment, where staff are empowered to speak up and contribute to safer practices.

2.3 Accountability and Quality Systems

The incident management process, from reporting to review and action, demonstrates the organisation's quality system in action. Miguel's prompt incident report and the subsequent risk assessment by Annette illustrate effective accountability. The executive's decision to replace the air conditioner underscores a robust quality system that guides care delivery and identifies areas for improvement.

2.4 Risk Management

Annette, the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Officer, conducted a thorough review and risk assessment, identifying the use of the hallway for exercise activities as a significant risk. The recommendation to replace the air conditioner, accepted by the Executive, demonstrates a proactive approach to risk mitigation and ensures a safer environment for clients and staff.

2.5 Incident Management

Miguel promptly filled out an incident report, highlighting the importance of safety over blame. This approach aligns with strengthened standards that encourage incident reporting and prevention, emphasising the need for a psychologically safe environment where workers feel comfortable reporting issues without fear of reprisal. This preventative approach helps identify and mitigate risks before they result in harm.

2.6 Feedback and Complaints Management

Shaun engaged with clients to consider improvements to the program and adapted it based on their feedback. This resulted in a refreshed program with music and games, significantly improving client outcomes and engagement scores. The emphasis on client feedback showcases the importance of involving older people in decisions that affect their care and the need for clients to be active partners in designing the programs they are involved with.

Person-Centred Approach: The proactive response to the incident and subsequent program improvements reflects a commitment to person-centred care, ensuring clients feel valued, listened to, and safe. The incident triggered some significant changes not only to the location of where the program was held, but how it was designed and delivered. This demonstrates how crucial it is to regularly review programs with clients and build in feedback opportunities. Once undertaken, client feedback reshaped the program, leading to increased engagement and satisfaction.

Conclusion

This case study exemplifies good practice in adhering to the requirements of Standard 2. By prioritising safety, fostering a psychologically safe environment and listening to client feedback, Brightside demonstrates how effective governance, and a responsive quality system can enhance care and services for older people. The organisation's actions reflect a deep commitment to diversity, person-centred practice and the overall wellbeing of both clients and staff.



Case Study 2B - Jacqui

Review and watch the [video](#) case study for Standard 2 and consider which outcomes are addressed, highlight the good practice you identify.

Case Study 2B (video script)

Jacqui is 70 years old. She is attending Bendigo Pride in the Park where she meets Chloe from Connect Social Support Group. They chat about the group and Jacqui tells Chloe “Over the last few years my social life has slowed down. Family and friends have moved away. I’m cautious in new environments and I never use to be.” Chloe asks why she feels that way and Jacqui says, “As an older trans woman I just feel I have to be careful”. Chloe thanks Jacqui for sharing that with her and asks her to consider joining the Group.

Chloe receives Jacqui’s referral and is eager to make sure she feels welcomed. She sets a meeting with all the staff and a separate one with the clients. She tells them “We have a new client joining, she is a transgendered woman, and I want us to make her feel welcome and remember we are completely inclusive here”.

On Jacqui’s first day she really enjoys the group and feels people are friendly and welcoming. A few weeks later Chloe receives a call from Barry a worker at a local LGBTI community group. He says Jacqui has felt uncomfortable about some conversations since she joined the group. Chloe says, “I’m disappointed as I spoke to all of the staff and clients and made it really clear that everyone was to make her feel welcome”. Barry says “I can see you were trying to be helpful, but I think this is why she’s had clients and staff say things like, they didn’t mind she was transgender. There were some questions about her transition and her body which are inappropriate. While you had good intentions you didn’t ask Jacqui how and if she wanted information about her being trans shared.” Chloe says she feels terrible and asks how she can make it right. Barry suggests all the staff attend LGBTI training and he can chat to the clients if they have questions.

Chloe meets with Jacqui and apologises, letting her know staff will undertake training and complete a self-assessment audit against the Rainbow Tick. Chloe asks if Jacqui would like to be involved with this audit and she is pleased to be consulted. Following the audit the organisation has a list of actions to progress including updating their policies about sharing client information. Jacqui is pleased to have LGBTI examples added to the policy and that it states clearly, if a client shares information about their gender identity, relationships or sexuality the staff member must check who the client is comfortable knowing that information and in what circumstances. Jacqui is happy with the changes and feels more confident being part of the group moving forward.



Reflective Activity

Reflect on the case study and answer the following questions:

1. Identify the specific outcomes of Standard 2 that are successfully applied in this case study. How are they demonstrated through the actions taken by Connect Social Support Group?

2. How did Chloe's actions reflect a person-centred approach, and what impact did involving Jacqui in the Rainbow Tick audit and policy updates have on her sense of inclusion and safety?

3. Considering Jacqui's experience as an older trans woman, how did Chloe's initial and subsequent actions address her unique needs? What lessons can be learned about creating a genuinely inclusive environment from this case study?

4. Imagine Jacqui joins your organisation. What specific steps would you take to ensure she feels welcomed and safe? How would you change or improve your current practices to better support her and other clients with diverse backgrounds?



Reflections

This case study demonstrates how the organisation meets the expectations of Standard 2 by effectively involving clients in shaping their care environment, fostering a culture of inclusivity and safety, and implementing responsive quality systems. The actions taken by Chloe and the Connect Social Support Group demonstrate continuous improvement and client engagement obtained through meaningful feedback and policy enhancements.

2.1 Partnering with Older People

This case study illustrates the importance of involving clients in designing their care. Chloe's initial efforts to create an inclusive environment were insufficient, leaving Jacqui feeling unsafe. Chloe corrected this by including Jacqui in the Rainbow Tick self-assessment audit and policy updates, resulting in an improved policy with clear guidelines for consent regarding the sharing of gender identity information. This process highlights the benefits of incorporating client feedback into organisational practices, enhancing privacy, and building trust.

2.2 Quality and Safety Culture

The case study underscores the need for psychological safety in care environments. Jacqui's reluctance to voice her concerns and the subsequent actions taken by Chloe and Barry highlight the importance of a supportive atmosphere where individuals feel secure expressing their issues and contributing to improvements. Addressing Jacqui's discomfort reflects a commitment to creating a psychologically safe environment.

2.3 Accountability and Quality Systems

Chloe's responsive actions, including acknowledging her mistakes, apologising, implementing staff training and updating policies, demonstrate an accountable quality system. Her commitment to undertaking the Rainbow Tick audit emphasises the importance of using feedback and complaints to drive continuous improvement.

2.4 Risk Management

The organisation's proactive approach in addressing Jacqui's discomfort and revising policies illustrates effective risk management. By incorporating feedback into policy updates and addressing risks associated with client interactions, the organisation enhances client safety and wellbeing.

2.5 Incident Management

Barry's feedback was crucial in highlighting Jacqui's issues. Chloe's actions—such as arranging staff training and policy revisions—reflect a robust incident management process. This underscores the significance of effective mechanisms for reporting, managing, and learning from incidents to improve service delivery.

2.6 Feedback and Complaints Management

Barry's feedback was essential in identifying and addressing Jacqui's concerns. Chloe's proactive response, including involving Jacqui in policy development and arranging training, demonstrates a strong system for managing feedback and complaints. This approach highlights the importance of capturing, responding to, and using client feedback for continuous improvement.

2.7 Information Management

The updated policy on sharing client information, developed with Jacqui's input, exemplifies effective information management. Clear guidelines on obtaining consent for discussing personal information ensure client preferences are respected, and privacy is maintained, reflecting a commitment to responsible and transparent management of client information.

Diversity and Person-Centred Practice: The case study highlights that true inclusion extends beyond good intentions. Chloe's initial approach, while well-meaning, had the exact opposite outcome. Inclusion is measured by clients' experiences and feelings, not just the intentions behind actions. Jacqui's discomfort and Barry's intervention reveal that a genuinely inclusive environment requires understanding and respecting diverse identities and personal boundaries. Chloe's decision to involve Jacqui in the self-assessment audit and policy updates shows a commitment to person-centred care by addressing Jacqui's specific needs and involving her in shaping the environment.

Conclusion

This case study demonstrates good practice connected to Standard 2 by emphasising genuine client engagement, a commitment to inclusivity, continuous improvement. It underscores the importance of respecting client preferences, fostering a culture of safety and effectively responding to feedback to support a positive and supportive environment for all individuals.

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The ESDT, SSD Connect Alliance and Grampians SSD thank CHSP service providers who contributed to the creation of the case studies.

We thank and acknowledge the support of Dale Park, DTC Consulting for the development of the webinar series.