



Recognising and Reducing Unconscious Bias in Everyday Care

Why it Matters

Unconscious bias refers to the automatic assumptions we all make based on our experiences, beliefs and environment. In aged care, these assumptions can influence communication, relationships and care decisions. Recognising our biases helps us provide respectful, person-centred and culturally responsive care for older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Unconscious Bias in Practice

Unconscious bias may occur when we:

- Make assumptions about a person's culture, beliefs or preferences.
- Treat everyone from the same cultural background the same.
- Mistake language barriers for confusion or lack of understanding.
- Misinterpret family involvement or communication styles.
- Expect people to adapt to the service rather than adapting our approach.

Applying Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

- Ask about the person's preferences rather than making assumptions.
- Adapt communication to suit language, health literacy and cultural needs.
- Use accredited interpreters when needed and avoid relying on family members for sensitive conversations.
- Recognise that behaviours, family roles and decision-making may be influenced by culture, life experiences and migration history.
- Reflect on your own assumptions and focus on understanding the individual.

Reflect before you respond

Ask yourself:

- What assumptions might I be making?
- Have I asked instead of assumed?
- Am I responding to the individual or to a stereotype?
- Could language, culture or past experiences be influencing this situation?
- How could I adapt my approach to better support this person?

Practice Tip

Cultural intelligence is not about knowing everything about every culture. It is about being curious, listening with respect and adapting your approach to meet the needs of each individual.

Learn More: [Micro-learning sessions by MAC](#)

