

A diverse group of business professionals, including a woman in the foreground and several men behind her, are shown in profile, smiling and looking towards the right. They are dressed in business attire, such as suits and a pink top. The background is bright and out of focus.

Work effectively with diversity

BSBDIV301

By the end of this topic, you should be able to:

- Recognise individual differences and respond appropriately
- Work effectively with individual differences

Diversity in the workplace

- Australia is a multicultural country



Image source: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/FTFCulturalDiversity-large.jpg>

- Australia forms part of the global economy
 - Today, more work occurs internationally – thus, businesses interact with a diverse range of people
- To be an effective member of the workplace, you must be able to:
 - Recognise people of different cultures
 - Interact productively with people of different cultures
- People you may interact with in the workplace include:
 - Co-workers and colleagues
 - Clients
 - Customers

- It is important to be culturally aware
- People of differing cultures have differing values, behaviours and approaches to life
 - You should be respectful of others' backgrounds in your interactions
 - You should recognise the knowledge, skills and experience that others bring
 - Diversity brings another perspective (e.g. showing innovative problem solving due to varying experiences and values)
 - Workers from other countries may be able to speak another language or be familiar with customs of others cultures/religions (e.g. food, greetings, dress codes) – which can create business opportunities

It is best to acknowledge that all people are unique individuals

Not all people of the same cultural group will have the same background, experiences and upbringing, so it is best not to make assumptions or stereotype them

Language barriers

- Language can often be a barrier when interacting with someone from another country
- An added complexity is that there are many words which exist across many languages, but with completely different meanings

While a 'gift' may be welcomed in an English-speaking country, it means 'poison' in German. Gift also means 'married' in Swedish!

A 'brat' is annoying individual in English, but means 'brother' in Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Croatian and Serbian.

You may be surprised if asked by a Hindi-speaking person if you want 'barf' in your drink - it means 'ice'.

Body language

- Body language is often interpreted differently in different countries

Examples	Meanings
Crossing your legs	• Middle East and Africa: Considered rude • Japan: Considered rude if done in the presence of an older person
Eye contact	• Australia, UK, USA: Interest and engagement • Middle East: Romantic interest by a woman • Africa and Latin America: Aggression, confrontation, disrespect
Thumbs up	• Australia: Good or satisfied • Middle East, Latin America, West Africa, Russia, Greece: Highly offensive
Personal space	• China, Saudi Arabia: People stand very close to each other (including people they do not know well) – much closer than people would in Australia, UK, USA, Norway or Germany.
Using your left hand	• Considered to be unclean in India, Africa, Sri Lanka and the Middle East. People always use their right hand for greeting, touching and eating.

- Countries can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, in **Brazil** it is common:
 - For punctuality not to be strictly adhered to.
 - To be embraced by others upon seeing them – even if you have only seen them recently.
 - To be interrupted during a conversation.
 - To physically touch others when talking to them.
 - To hand business contacts your business card when you are introduced to them.



- Countries can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, in **India** it is common:
 - To assume that prices are always negotiable unless a price is printed on something.
 - To avoid expressing 'no' – verbally or non verbally.
 - To eat food with fingers or bread used as utensils.
 - To bid farewell to each individual when leaving a group.



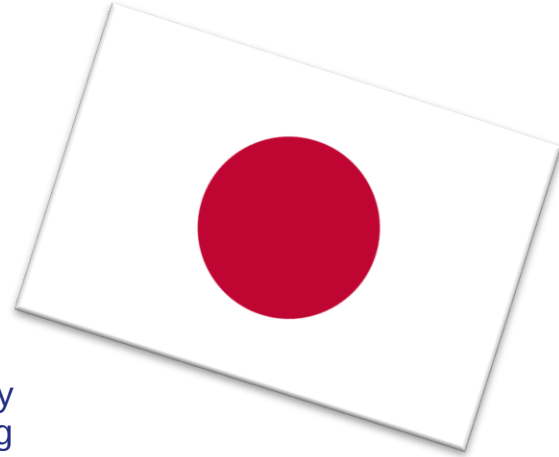
Traditions and practices

- Countries can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, in **Italy** it is common:
 - To be judged on your clothes, shoes and accessories.
 - To communicate with others by calling on the telephone, but hanging up before they answer. This lets them know that you are thinking of them; it is not a request for them to call you back.
 - To make business appointments 2-3 weeks ahead.
 - To haggle over price and delivery date.
 - To look closely at a business card before putting it in your card holder, as a sign of respect.
 - To use calling cards in social situations – slightly larger than traditional business cards (include the person's name, address, title or academic honours and telephone number).



For more information, see: <http://www.commisceo-global.com/country-guides>

- Countries can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, in **Japan** it is common:
 - To wait to be introduced.
 - To bow as a greeting. The deeper the bow, the more respect shown.
 - For people to laugh with their mouth closed. Showing your teeth is considered impolite.
 - For people to blow their nose out of sight.
 - To decline a gift a few times before accepting it.
 - To be offended by monetary tips. Workers feel they are paid to do their job and they take pride in doing it well, without added incentive.



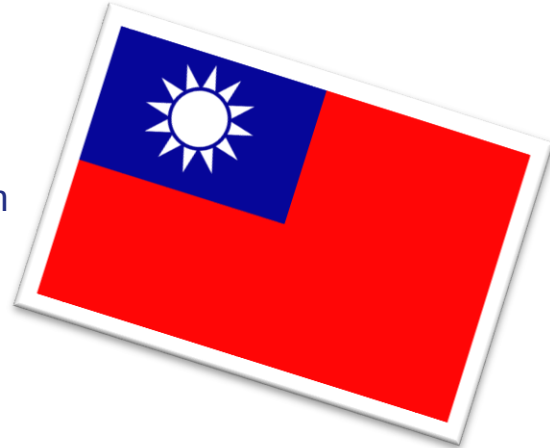
- Countries can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, in the **Philippines** it is common:
 - To make business appointments 3-4 weeks ahead.
 - For initial greetings to be formal and to start with greeting the eldest or most important person first.
 - To be offered food or drink. Do not turn down offers of hospitality or your colleagues will lose face.
 - For gifts not to be opened upon receiving them.
 - To point with your lips, as opposed to your fingers.



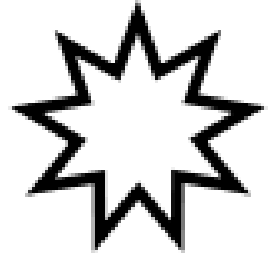
- Countries can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, in **Spain** it is common:
 - To present your business card to the receptionist upon arriving.
 - To shake hands when introduced to someone.
 - To be interrupted when speaking. This is not perceived as an insult, but that the person is interested in what is being said.
 - For businesses to close for a 2+ hour break in the early afternoon.



- Countries can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, in **Taiwan** it is common:
 - To greet others with a handshake (but not as firmly as in many other countries).
 - For people to look towards the ground as a sign of respect when greeting someone.
 - To be address people using their title and surname. People will wait until invited before using someone's first name.
 - To present and accept items using both hands.



- Religions can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, within the **Bahá'í** faith:
 - Baha'is observe 11 holy days each year. On nine of these holy days, Baha'is abstain from work.
 - Observant Baha'is do not consume alcohol.
 - An annual fasting period is observed from 2-20 March.



The Bahá'í faith was founded in 19th-century Persia

Three core principles establish a basis for Bahá'í teachings and doctrine:

- *There is only one God who is the source of all creation*
- *All major religions have the same spiritual source and come from the same God*
- *All humans have been created equal, coupled with the unity in diversity*

- Religions can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, within the **Buddhist** faith:
 - Upon entering a building, shoes and head coverings may be removed.
 - A common greeting is to put the palms of the hands together and raise them towards the chin.
 - Touching of a person's head is considered to be impolite.



Buddhism was founded in India between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE

Fundamental beliefs of Buddhism include:

- *Reincarnation – the concept that people are reborn after dying*
- *Karma – one's own happiness or suffering are caused by one's own actions*

- Religions can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, within the **Christian** faith:
 - Followers have great respect for religious symbols, such as the cross.
 - Many Christians fast during Lent, a six-week period prior to Easter.
 - Some Christians do not drink alcohol.



Christianity originated more than 2000 years ago in Israel

Fundamental beliefs of Christianity include:

- *Jesus is the Son of God*
- *Jesus is part of a Trinitarian God – Father , Son and Holy Spirit*

- Religions can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, within the **Hindu** faith:
 - When greeting, it is not customary to hug or kiss a member of the opposite sex – rather, palms are clasped together and held vertically near the chest



Hinduism is a fusion of traditions, developed in India from 500 BCE and 300 CE

Prominent themes in Hindu beliefs include:

- *Dharma - ethics/duties*
- *Samsāra - the continuing cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth*
 - *Karma - action, intent and consequences*
- *Moksha - liberation from samsara or liberation in this life*
 - *The various Yogas - paths or practices*

- Religions can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, within the **Islamic/Muslim** faith:
 - Men or women are not comfortable with someone from the opposite gender standing too close.
 - Food containing animal fat or animal by-product is not consumed, unless the animal is slaughtered according to Muslim tradition.



Islam is based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, who was born in 570CE in Makkah (Mecca), Saudi Arabia

Fundamental beliefs of Islam include:

- *The purpose of existence is to worship God*
- *The Quran is the verbatim word of God, as revealed to Muhammad*

- Religions can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, within the **Jewish** faith:
 - Jews will not undertake secular activities from sunset Friday to sunset Sunday.
 - Some observant men will be bearded and wear a kippah (skullcap) or hat at all times.



Judaism originated in approximately 1800 BCE in the Middle East.

Fundamental beliefs of Judaism include:

- *God created the world, is eternal and is still actively involved in world affairs*
 - *Moses is the main prophet.*

- Religions can have specific traditions and practices.
- For example, within the **Sikh** faith:
 - A Sikh's head or turban should never be touched or insulted in any way.
 - Males carry the surname of Singh (means 'lion').
 - Females carry the surname of Kaur (means 'lioness/princess').



Sikhism originated in the Punjab region during the 19th century

Fundamental beliefs of Sikhism include:

- *Simran - meditation on the words of the Guru Granth Sahib*
 - *Secular life is intertwined with spiritual life*

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out basic rights and freedoms that apply to all people regardless of their background
- These rights have been adopted into Australian federal law through legislation, including:
 - *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*
 - *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
 - *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*
 - *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)

- The *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)* ensures that people are not treated less favourably on the ground of age in various areas of public life
 - For example: Employment, education, access to premises, provision of goods/ services/facilities, accommodation, disposal of land
- Various exemptions exist, which allow the following practices:
 - Benefits to be provided to persons of a particular age (e.g. seniors discount, charity)
 - Religious practices that conform to the doctrines/beliefs of that religion
 - Voluntary bodies who may limit admission or benefits/facilities/services to persons of a particular age
 - Offering superannuation, insurance, credit, pensions or allowances only to people of a certain age

- The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* eliminates discrimination against people with disabilities in various areas of public life
 - For example: Employment, education, access to premises, provision of goods/services/facilities, accommodation, disposal of land, activities of clubs/sport
- Disabilities include:
 - Physical
 - Intellectual
 - Psychiatric
 - Sensory
 - Neurological
 - Learning
 - Physical disfigurement
 - Disorders
 - Illnesses or diseases that affect thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement
 - Presence of organisms causing (or capable of causing disease or illness)

- The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* outlines a range of exemptions, which allow the following practices:
 - Special measures put in place to ensure people with disabilities have equal opportunities (e.g. access to assistance animals, goods, facilities, services, opportunities, grants, benefits, programs, charity, pensions)
 - This exemption does not affect the rates of salary or wages paid to people with disabilities
 - This exemption does not mean that a person with a disability should automatically be selected over a person without a disability – decisions should still be based on merit, skills and abilities
 - Discrimination on the basis of a person having an infectious disease, where it is necessary to protect public health

- The *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)* prohibits:
 - Discrimination in all areas of public life (e.g. employment, access to places/facilities, provision of goods and services, accommodation) when on the basis of:
 - Race
 - Colour
 - Decent or national/ethnic origin
 - Immigrant status.
 - Racial hatred (i.e. a public act likely to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate on the basis of race)

Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)

- The *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)* outlines a range of exemptions, which allow the following practices:
 - Adoption of special measures (e.g. targeted recruitment) to assist disadvantaged racial groups
 - Charitable benefits to be provided to persons of a particular race, colour or national/ethnic origin
 - Racial hatred seen through performance, exhibition, distribution or artistic work
 - Racial hatred that arises from statements, publications, discussion or debate held for genuine academic, artistic or scientific purposes
 - Racial hatred due to the publication of a fair and accurate report of events/matters of public interest
 - Fair comment on events/matters of public interest that result in racial hatred – if the comment is an expression of genuine belief held by the person making the comment

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

- The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)* promotes equality between men and women in public life (e.g. employment, education, provision of goods/services/facilities, accommodation, disposal of land, clubs) by:
 - Eliminating discrimination on the basis of:
 - Sex
 - Marital/relationship status
 - Pregnancy (or potential pregnancy)
 - Breastfeeding
 - Family responsibilities
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender identity
 - Intersex status
 - Eliminating sexual harassment

- The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)* outlines a range of exemptions, which allow the following practices:
 - Hiring on the basis of a person's sex where it is a genuine occupational qualification
 - Granting a woman rights or privileges in connection with pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding
 - The provision of services which can only be provided to members of one sex
 - Discrimination on the basis of sex for potential workers in the residential care of children
 - Religious practices that conform to the doctrines/beliefs of that religion
 - Providing education only to persons of a particular sex (e.g. same sex schools)

- Individual Australian states have also enacted their own laws/legislation regarding equal opportunity and discrimination.
- For example, within Queensland, the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*:
 - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, relationship status, pregnancy, parental status, breastfeeding, race, age, impairment, religious belief or religious activity, political belief or activity, trade union activity, lawful sexual activity, gender identity, sexuality, family responsibilities, and association with or in relation to a person who has any of the above attributes.
 - Prohibits sexual harassment and vilification on the basis of race, religion, sexuality or gender identity.

- In addition to legislation, the following workplace documentation can also provide direction on how to work effectively with diversity:
 - Codes of conduct/practice
 - Organisational policies and procedures
 - For example, human resource manuals
 - Workplace standards

Respect in practice

Respect is about how you treat other people. You are required to show consideration for other people in your advice, decision making and service delivery.

Respect and courtesy

Members of the community and your work colleagues are entitled to receive personal respect and courtesy and to maintain their dignity in their interaction with you. Employees can reasonably expect to work in an environment that promotes their ability to work with one another and shows regard to the sensitivities of people within the workplace.

Equity

Equity is about being fair and just to all people, but does not necessarily mean treating everyone in the same way. You may need to treat a person differently according to their circumstances and needs, in order to give them an equal chance in comparison with others. The programs and services that you are involved in developing and delivering must be made inclusive and responsive to all groups. For example, a service that can only be accessed through the internet may inadvertently disadvantage people who are unable to access the internet or who are sight impaired.

Diversity

An important part of respecting others is valuing their diversity. By valuing the differences that all employees bring to the workplace, we can better meet the needs of the community. For example, a person from a different cultural background or experience may bring insight and knowledge to the work environment that may assist in providing more effective services to the community.

No discrimination

Discrimination, directly or indirectly, in your treatment of individuals or groups on the grounds of age, gender, race, disability, sexuality, marital status, pregnancy, or any other ground covered by equal opportunity or other anti-discrimination legislation is unlawful, as is sexual harassment.

https://www.cancersa.org.au/assets/images/pdfs/Code_of_conduct.pdf

Acknowledging diversity

- Diversity can be acknowledged through action in the workplace
- For example:
 - Allowing flexibility of working hours or duties to accommodate others' needs
 - For example: Prayer, medical requirements
 - Promoting and recognising days of significance for diverse groups
 - Providing training and learning programs
 - For example: To assist in understanding diversity, to enable others to work in new areas
 - Purchasing or modifying equipment to meet the specific needs of others
 - For example: Wheelchair ramps, voice-activated software, larger screens for visually impaired, accessible toilets
 - Providing other support
 - For example: Interpreters, removing obstacles, making space for assistance animals, ensuring information is visible, improve lighting, remove background noise, handing stock from higher shelves to customers

Workplaces are not required to do everything possible to accommodate others, only what is considered a 'reasonable adjustment' (i.e. not changes that would cause undue financial hardship to the workplace)

Acknowledging diversity

- When addressing diversity, be sure to consider social justice

EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.



In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.



In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Image source: http://img-9gag-fun.9cache.com/photo/ajAerM1_700b_v2.jpg

- Australia's diversity is one of its greatest strengths
- It is important to recognise and respect the individual differences in colleagues, clients and customers – responding to their differences sensitively
- Acknowledge the qualities, skills and backgrounds of those around you so that you can enhance your work outcomes