

# Part 3

## Standards, Principles and Practice

Better health outcomes can be achieved by best work practice, which includes consideration of and working to the National Practice Standards and ensuring, where possible, support is offered within an interdisciplinary team in a culturally competent and culturally secure environment.



# Chapters

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National practice standards for professional practitioners working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health are described, with an emphasis on principles, standards and practice, that contribute to the capacity and empowerment of practitioners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, families and communities. Also discussed are national service standards and how their effective implementation and integration can ensure the provision of culturally competent mental health services.

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Complex issues and contestations surrounding cultural competence and the critical need for practitioners to develop knowledge, skills, understandings and attributes to be able to work in diverse cultural settings, and what is involved in being a professional practitioner, is explored. Principles, standards and practice frameworks that contribute to the capacity and empowerment of mental health practitioners are outlined.

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A focus on interdisciplinary care as a model of practice supporting equality and interconnectedness of responsibility amongst team members is examined. The professionals and practitioners that comprise interdisciplinary teams working in mental health and their roles are outlined. The context of how interdisciplinary care fits into social and emotional wellbeing values and mental health best practice and human rights is explored.

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The experiences of caregiving for Aboriginal families living with a serious mental illness is explained. The disconnection with mental health providers and their lack of knowledge of Aboriginal concepts of caregiving are highlighted. There is limited knowledge of the complexity of caregiving across the mental health sector. Aboriginal caregiving is explored through multiple lenses. The stories of Aboriginal caregivers help to explain their experiences for those living with a serious mental illness.

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Communicating and engaging effectively across diverse contexts and attending to concepts of community and culture, kinship affiliations, community obligations and values of people are addressed. Protocols for communicating and engaging with Torres Strait Islander people are highlighted. Various strategies which highlight the need for recognition and respect of cultural difference are explained.