Social Justice

Social justice: When all people in our world are considered in a fair and equitable manner, including the distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within a society.

i.e., Individuals who live in lower socioeconomic areas or isolated communities should have the same access to healthcare services and education as the general population.

Social justice principles:

1. Access and equity.
2. Diversity.
3. Supportive environments.

These aim to reduce health inequities in Australia.

Access and equity: Means that resources are allocated in accordance with the needs of individuals of individuals and populations with the overarching goal of equal health outcomes.

Example: Certain population groups are allocated more funding because they’re identified as priorities because of their lower health outcomes (i.e., indigenous).

Diversity: Refers to respecting and accounting for the differences that exist between individuals and people groups e.g., ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, age/generation and socioeconomic status.

Example:

* Ensuring that brochures for healthcare services are in multiple languages and have interpreters in hospitals to allow all individuals to access health information.
* Healthcare facilities employ health professionals who are diverse and/or “culturally competent”.

Supportive environments: Environments where people live, work and play that protect people from threats to health and that increase their ability to make health-promoting choices.

The government looks to create supportive environments for all people, but also looks at the environments of particular people groups to determine if these might be reasons for poorer health outcomes.

Example: Ensuring rural and remote locations have fewer fast food outlets and sufficiently stocked grocery stores to promote nutrition.

Closing the Gap Program

Primary objective: To achieve equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in health and life expectancy within a generation.

In 2008, these targets were set:

1. To close the life expectancy gap within a generation.
2. To halve the gap in mortality rates for indigenous children under five within a decade.
3. To ensure access to early childhood education for all indigenous 4-year-olds in remote communities within 5 years.
4. To halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade.
5. To halve the gap for indigenous students in Year 12 attainment rates by 2020.
6. To halve the gap in employment outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians within a decade.

(Let Me Eradicate Remnants of Your Elephants)

Strategies used to increase equality for indigenous Australians:

* Building partnerships across all levels.
* Increasing education (at the community level, with healthcare training, teacher training and organisations).
* More effective distribution of funding.
* Increasing participation by indigenous Australians in decision making.
* Improving access to healthcare (5 A’s of access).
* Improving the cultural knowledge of healthcare professionals.

Keys to successful outcomes include:

* Holistic approaches that work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in way that take into account the full cultural, social, emotional and economic context of indigenous people’s lives, including an awareness of the ongoing legacy of trauma, grief and loss associated with colonisation.
* Active involvement of indigenous communities in every stage of program development and delivery.
* Employing indigenous staff and involving them fully in program design, delivery and evaluation, and providing adequate training, where necessary, to build capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
* Developing committed, skilled staff (indigenous and non-indigenous) and providing diversity and cultural awareness training.
* Adopting a strength-based perspective that builds and develops the existing strengths, skills and capacities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
* Clear plans for research and evaluation to identify successful aspects of programs.

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| Term | Definition |
| Social justice | When all people are considered in a fair and equitable manner, including the distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within a society. |
| Access and equity | Resources are allocated according to the needs of the individual or population with the overarching goal of equal health outcomes. |
| Diversity | Respecting and accounting for the differences that exist between individuals and populations e.g., race, ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic status. |
| Supportive environments | Environments where people live, work and play that protect people from threats to health and increase their ability to make health-promoting decisions. |
| Assertiveness | A communication style in which your communication allows you to accurately express your needs, concerns and opinions whilst being respectful to others. |
| Stress management | Techniques/skills/strategies that enable a person to effectively use coping mechanisms to deal with stress. |
| Resilience | The ability to bounce back after challenging, difficult times; the ability to endure when faced with adversity. |
| Comparative need | Needs that other populations with similar characteristics demonstrated in the same context. |
| Normative need | Discrepancies between what the individual or community has and what’s considered to be the norm/standard, which is usually determined by authority/expert figures in the field. |
| Felt need | Needs that the individual or community perceive for themselves. |
| Expressed need | Felt needs that are acted on by the individual or community. |

Felt need -