

Cultural Awareness, Sensitivity, and Safety

Awareness: the acknowledgment of differences in people (diversity)

Sensitivity: refers to a set of skills that allows you to understand and learn about people whose cultural background is not the same as yours. In any organization cultural sensitivity reflects an environment that respects diversity. It is recognition that there is an appropriate response to the cultural expectations and needs of any given individual or group within a diverse community. Given the diversity that exists in schools and the community, staffs need to give consideration to developing plans and strategies that are flexible and best address this diversity.

Safety: reflects a value and a way of 'being'. It is an individual or collective value that sends the message to each person that they are respected, honoured, valued, cared for, included, and belong. It is less about learning the cultural aspects of a person or group, but more about being self-reflective in looking at our own attitudes, biases and behaviour towards others. Asking ourselves the question-how do my attitudes align in relation to this value and what do I need to adjust in myself to genuinely respond in a way that others feel they are in a safe place.