OSACO
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

| REMOTE PRESENTATION

BEYOND TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

Integrating Interculturality and Intersectionality in Responses to Safeguarding Cases

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OUR STARTING POINT

TRAUMA-INFORMED IS NECESSARY — BUT NOT ENOUGH

Trauma-informed practice is widely recognised as best practice in safeguarding.

But experience shows it can fall short on its own. If the cultural identity, social positioning, and lived reality of survivors, witnesses and subjects are not meaningfully understood and respected, even well-designed responses can fail.

Safeguarding in faith-based organisations takes place within complex systems of **identity**, **culture**, **spirituality**, and **community**. Individuals do not experience harm solely as individuals; they experience it through the multiple systems to which they belong, including family, culture, faith community, and religious tradition.

OUR PROPOSITION

Culturally attuned and intersectional practice is a foundational element of ethical, transparent and accountable safeguarding — not an optional add-on.

GROUNDED IN PRACTICE

WHERE THIS LEARNING COMES FROM

Practitioner insights drawn from real safeguarding work across diverse cultural and faith contexts — within Church and faith-based settings operating under Canon Law, and in collaboration with law enforcement.

SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE

- Aotearoa New Zealand
- Melanesia & the Pacific Islands
- Africa & the Middle East

HUMANITARIAN & DEVELOPMENT

- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Kenya
- Uganda

THE RISK

WHEN GOOD INTENTIONS AREN'T ENOUGH

Culturally misaligned approaches — even well-meaning ones — can quietly damage safeguarding outcomes. The harm is often invisible to the practitioner causing it.

UNDERMINE TRUST

Relationships that safeguarding depends on are eroded before they form.

LIMIT DISCLOSURE

Survivors and witnesses withhold what they cannot safely share.

WEAKEN OUTCOMES

Protection and justice are compromised despite the best of intentions.

CONCEPT 1

INTERCULTURALITY

Recognising interculturality as a necessary component of safeguarding — not a courtesy, but a condition for effectiveness.

WHAT IT UNLOCKS

Learning & exchange

Opportunities to adopt new practices through genuine dialogue.

Plural societies

Stronger effectiveness in migrant and culturally diverse communities.

Minority sensitivity

Greater attention to minorities and their specific protection needs.

CONCEPT 1

INTERCULTURALITY

SAFEGUARDING BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL

People do not experience harm in isolation.

Harm is experienced through the **multiple systems** to which they belong.

CONCEPT 1

INTERCULTURALITY

HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND THE SELF?

Our sense of self is culturally shaped.

INDIVIDUALISTIC PERSPECTIVE	COLLECTIVIST PERSPECTIVE
I am an individual	I am because we are
Personal autonomy and independence	Relational identity and interdependence
Individual rights and freedoms	Collective wellbeing and responsibilities
Self-determined choices	Decisions made with community in mind
Focus on personal goals and achievement	Focus on harmony, belonging and duty
Disclosure seen as an individual decision	Disclosure may affect family and community

CONCEPT 1

INTERCULTURALITY

THE CHURCH IS MORE THAN AN ORGANISATION

It is a system of belonging.

- Source of meaning and purpose
- Spiritual home and belonging
- Social support and care
- Cultural heritage and tradition
- Intertwined with family and faith journey

WHEN HARM BREAKS MORE THAN TRUST

- Loss of trust in leaders
- Loss of trust in community
- Spiritual injury and moral injury
- Identity crisis and confusion

- Shame, self-blame and isolation
- Fear of exclusion
- Questions of faith
- Conflicted loyalty and silence

CONCEPT 2

INTERSECTIONALITY

Culture never operates alone. It interacts with other dimensions of identity and power — and those intersections shape how harm is experienced.

CULTURE INTERSECTS WITH

- **Gender**
- **Age**
- **Disability**
- **Faith**
- **Socio-economic status**
- **Power**

SHAPING: vulnerability • access to justice • experiences of harm

THE PRACTITIONER STANCE

CULTURAL HUMILITY OVER CULTURAL SAMENESS

You don't need to belong to the same culture as the people you work with — but you do need cultural humility, curiosity and adaptability.

RECOGNISING WHEN…

RAPPORT COMES FIRST

Relationship-building must precede formal processes.

DECISIONS ARE COLLECTIVE

Community structures — not individuals — shape decision-making.

PRACTICE IS SACRED

Spiritual or customary practices are central to a survivor's sense of safety.

CASE CONTEXT ·
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

MĀORI CONTEXTS

Tikanga is integral to safe, respectful engagement.

CULTURALLY ATTUNED PRACTICE

- **Koha**

  Offering food as a gesture of respect and relationship.

- **Te Reo Māori**

  Use of language to honour identity and build trust.

- **Karakia & waiata**

  Prayer and song that hold space and create safety.

- **Sacred space protocols**

  Observing tikanga around places of significance.

CASE CONTEXT · MELANESIA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Relationship and respect precede process.

CULTURALLY ATTUNED PRACTICE

- **Respect for elders**

  Engagement that recognises authority and standing.

- **Relational engagement**

  Trust is built through relationship before formal steps.

- **Culturally attuned advisors**

  Local knowledge guides culturally safe responses.

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CASE CONTEXT · MELANESIA

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Working within kastom and community structures.

CULTURALLY ATTUNED PRACTICE

- **Kastom traditions**

  Customary practice shapes what safety and respect mean.

- **The wantok system**

  Kinship and obligation networks influence disclosure.

- **Gender & religious norms**

  Navigated with sensitivity and awareness.

- **Community decision-making**

  Collective structures guide how outcomes are reached.

CASE CONTEXT · AFRICA

DR CONGO

Faith-based and community engagement reinforcing the same principles in a different setting.

CULTURALLY ATTUNED PRACTICE

Community & faith structures

Local institutions are central to trust and access.

Same principles, new context

Intercultural responsiveness travels across regions.

Lessons for prevention

Insights feeding back into preventive safeguarding.

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

THREE LAYERS, ONE FOUNDATION

Each layer compensates for the blind spots of the others. Together they form the basis for both stronger response and stronger prevention.

TRAUMA-INFORMED

Recognising and responding to the impact of trauma.

+

INTERCULTURAL

Understanding and respecting cultural identity and context.

+

INTERSECTIONAL

Reading how identity and power compound vulnerability.

=

Ethical, transparent and accountable safeguarding
— and a stronger foundation for prevention.

PRACTICAL TOOLS

A PRACTITIONER CHECKLIST

Six prompts to integrate intercultural and intersectional responsiveness into existing trauma-informed practice.

Build rapport before process

Recognise when relationship must come before formal steps.

Map the intersections

Consider how gender, age, disability, faith, status and power compound.

Identify the decision-makers

Is this an individual or a collective / community decision?

Make space for custom & spirit

Koha, karakia, kastom, elders — honour what creates safety.

Bring in local knowledge

Engage culturally attuned advisors; ask rather than assume.

Lead with cultural humility

Curiosity and adaptability over expertise in another's culture.

THANK YOU

Culturally responsive, intersectional practice is the foundation of safeguarding that protects everyone.

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