

How can workers be more inclusive?

What to consider when talking to consumers

Acknowledge your bias



We all have biases (learned assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes). We may not be aware of these biases because they are based on instinct rather than analysis or evidence. It is important to reflect on your own identity and experiences to avoid making judgements, thoughts, decisions, or actions based on false stereotypes.

Validate consumers



You may not always understand a consumer's illness, especially if it is complex or chronic, but this doesn't mean their concerns and pain are not valid. You also may not understand all consumer identities and experiences, but you can still validate them by respecting consumer privacy, using inclusive language, keeping an open mind, recognising potential barriers, and listening to their needs.

Don't make assumptions



Making assumptions about consumers can make them feel dismissed, ignored, or even unsafe. This results in poor health outcomes and an ongoing mistrust of the health system. To avoid assumptions, recognise your biases and listen to consumers health priorities and concerns.

Understand mistrust or fear of the health system



It is important to recognise that consumers may delay or avoid health care for reasons that have nothing to do with you! This could be because the system is unfamiliar or overwhelming, or because some communities continue to face discrimination or abuse within large institutions.

Respect consumers as experts



Recognise that consumers are experts in their own bodies, lives, and their health needs. If you encourage a partnership with consumers, they can be a great source of information for you!

Understand it's okay to get it wrong sometimes!



It is inevitable you might not always say or do the 'right' thing. In these situations try not to be reactive or defensive. If you keep an open mind you can learn what language, action, or advice is appropriate for next time.