



## **Respectful and Culturally Appropriate Care Policy**

The aim of this policy is to set guidelines to encourage respectful, dignified and culturally appropriate care to all our patients.

Tenambit Medical Centre is committed to providing all patients with an environment that is pleasant, safe, inclusive, professional, respectful, and free from any and all forms of discrimination.

Discrimination based on protected attributes is prohibited under discrimination law. This includes treating a person unfairly, as well as any forms of bullying and harassment.

Discrimination involves treating people less favourably because of their:

- Gender
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Disability
- Language
- Ethnicity
- Religious belief
- Thinking style
- Experience
- Education
- Cultural background
- Socio-economic background

Tenambit Medical Centre understands that the ideal patient-practitioner partnership is a collaboration based on mutual respect and responsibility for the patient's health. All staff recognise the importance of being aware of cultural differences to avoid conflicts related to diversity.

To provide respectful and culturally appropriate care, all practice staff will:

- Be welcoming, polite, respectful, caring, positive, friendly, empathetic and helpful.
- Observe the attitudes and behaviours of each patient.
- Apply clear and effective communication skills.
- Take into consideration subtle difference in how people communicate (verbally and non-verbally).
- Recognise patients who may be anxious, frightened or unfamiliar without practice.
- Ask for clarification to ensure the patient understands what is required.
- Restrict comments to the point at hand.
- Determine whether it is appropriate to use a patient's first name.
- Determine if the patient requires a translating service.
- Refrain from discussing politics or religion.
- Avoid colloquialisms.
- Say "please" and "thank you" to show courtesy and respect.

## Standard C2.1A

Tenambit Medical Centre has a zero-tolerance policy towards discriminatory behaviours and will take disciplinary action against any such behaviour.

To accommodate a patient's philosophies and factors that may affect the provision of respectful and culturally appropriate care, consideration will be given to the:

- Patients' preference of clinician of a specific gender
- Role of a patient's family
- Impact that a patient's culture has on their own health beliefs.
- History of traumatic events including, but not limited to, those associated with forced migration.

If a carer has an ongoing role in the day-to-day care of a patient, the carer will be included in the patient-practitioner relationship with the consent of the patient, if the patient is able to give consent.

### **Patient Health Care Rights**

Tenambit Medical Centre recognises the importance of providing safe, high-quality care and follows the Australian charter of healthcare rights for patients.

The healthcare rights from a patient's perspective include:

- **Access**
  - Receives healthcare treatment and services that meet my needs.
- **Safety**
  - Receives safe and highly-quality healthcare that meets national standards.
  - Be cared for in an environment that makes me feel safe.
- **Respect**
  - Be treated as an individual, and with dignity and respect.
  - Have my culture, identify, beliefs and choices recognised and respected.
- **Partnership**
  - Ask questions and be involved in open and honest communication.
  - Make decisions with my healthcare provider to the extent that I choose, and I am able to.
  - Include the people that I want involved in planning and decision making.
- **Information**
  - Receive clear information about my condition, the possible benefits and risks of different tests and treatments, so I can give informed consent.
  - Receive information about services, waiting times and costs.
  - Be given assistance, when I need it, to help me understand and use the health information.
  - Request access to my health information.
  - Be told something has gone wrong during my healthcare, how it happened, how it may affect me and what is being done to make my care safe.
- **Privacy**
  - Have my personal privacy respected.
  - Have information about me and my health kept secure and confidential.
- **Give Feedback**
  - Provide feedback or make a complaint without it affecting the way that I am treated.
  - Have my concerns addressed in a transparent and timely manner.
  - Share my experiences to improve the quality of care and health services.

## Standard C2.1A

For more information about patients healthcare rights, please visit [Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights | Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care](#)

### **Patients Refusal of treatment or advice**

Tenambit Medical Centre recognises that patients may refuse a practitioner's recommended course of treatment, including advice, procedures, treatments or referrals to other healthcare providers.

It is the practices responsibility to record in the patient's health record:

- The patient's refusal of treatment or advise.
- The patient's competency and capacity to make decisions.
- The action taken by the practitioner.
- Any other relevant information, such as an indication that the patient intends to seek another clinical opinion.

### **Patients' Rights to seek another clinical opinion.**

Tenambit Medical Centre recognises that patients have the right to seek another clinical opinion from a different healthcare provider if they wish to do so.

It is the practitioner's responsibility to record in the patient's health record:

- The patient's decision
- The action taken by the practitioner.
- Referrals to other healthcare providers.

Patients will be encouraged to notify the treating practitioner when they decide to follow another healthcare provider's advice so that the practitioner can discuss any potential risk of this decision.

### **Practitioners deciding to no longer treat a patient**

When a practitioner no longer considers it appropriate to treat a patient, the practitioner has the right to discontinue treatment. This particularly relevant when the practitioner believes they can no longer provide the patient with optimal care.

In such circumstances, the practitioner will:

- Raise the situation with our practice manager, Sarah Anstey.
- Record the reasons and management of the situation in the patient's health record.
- Document a process to be followed by staff if the patient makes any subsequent contact with our practice.

Tenambit Medical Centre recognises that, irrespective of a decision to discontinue the treatment of a patient, there is still a professional and ethical obligation to provide emergency care to the patient.

### **Dealing with distressed patients**

Patients in distress are regarded as an urgent medical matter, whether the contact is in person or over the phone. Occasionally patients will arrive in the waiting room in a state of physical or emotional distress and present tearful, aggressive, bleeding, in pain or in a comatose/unconscious state.

For distressed patients, our practice staff must:

- Apply appropriate triaging.
- Notify medical staff immediately.

## Standard C2.1A

- Be prepared to call an ambulance if requested by the clinical team.
- Provide an alternative waiting area like the treatment room or empty consultation room.
- Monitor and reassure the patient at all times until they have been assessed by the practitioner.
- Not physically touching difficult or aggressive patients.

### **Managing health inequalities**

The team at Tenambit Medical Centre recognises that there are some significant differences in key indicators of the general health and wellbeing of specific groups within the Australian community. We understand that health gains have not been equally shared across all sections of the population and Australia currently has morbidity and mortality inequalities between population subgroups. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, homeless youth, children of single parent families, people with developmental disabilities, people with severe and persistent mental health issues, the LGBTIQ+ community, refugees and people from culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

To combat these inequities, our staff will accommodate the specific health needs of individuals who may be suffering a disadvantage.

All practice staff members will undergo education on this policy are encouraged to raise matters relating to cultural awareness at staff meetings. We have two Medical Practice Assistant's in the practice that have undergone diversity training as apart of their education.

### **References and helpful links**

[Health Translations | Health Translations](#)

[Multi-language health resources | healthdirect](#)

[Translated health information about medicines - NPS MedicineWise](#)

[An introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health cultural protocols and perspectives \(racgp.org.au\)](#)