



RACP
Specialists. Together
EDUCATE ADVOCATE INNOVATE

RACP Framework for improving person-centred care and consumer engagement



February 2024

“*The good physician treats the disease;
the great physician treats the patient.*”

Sir William Osler



We acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Custodians and Elders – past, present, and emerging – of the lands and waters on which RACP members and staff live, learn and work. RACP acknowledges Māori as tangata whenua and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners in New Zealand.

Indigenous Australian cultural elements used in this document were designed by Riki Salam of [We are 27](#) and developed for the RACP as part of the commissioned artwork, Healing Place. The circular motifs represent stars helping people to navigate from different places and country.

The Māori cultural element, the Tāniko pattern, was designed by Kaaterina Kerekere of [KE Design](#) for the RACP. The foundation of this design comes from Waharua kōpito tāniko motif. This stylised version of the pattern refers to the notion of transformation and change that occurs at such meeting points. For the RACP it symbolises our trans-Tasman training relationship, connecting the Indigenous peoples of two nations and bringing together medical specialists with patients.

This document was first developed in 2016 by the RACP in partnership with the [Health Issues Centre](#).



Excellent healthcare experience and healthier communities

The RACP's goal in improving person-centred care and consumer engagement is, at the individual level, for patients and their carers to have excellent healthcare experiences, and more broadly, for healthier communities across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Person-centred care cannot be achieved by the individual alone – it must be done in partnership with many stakeholders, while always ensuring that it is purposeful, inclusive, transparent, and respectful.

This framework was initially developed in 2016 with a focus on patient-centred care; however, the focus now is on the 'person' rather than the 'patient'. The aim of the framework is to reinforce the RACP commitment to person-centred care and consumer engagement in its activities.

Person-centred care is

“working with patients and families, rather than just doing to or for them¹.”

¹ Institute for Patient- and Family-Centred Care, <https://www.ipfcc.org/about/pfcc.html>

Improving person-centred care and consumer engagement

This document outlines the RACP's commitment and its approach to enabling person-centred care and consumer engagement.

What is person-centred care?

Person-centred care helps meet the aims of improving healthcare safety, quality and coordination, and quality of life. It respects the preferences, needs, and values the individual's health and life goals.

The World Health Organization has defined integrated person-centred care as *"putting people and communities, not diseases, at the centre of health systems, and empowering people to take charge of their own health rather than being passive recipients of services."*²

In Australia, the Australasian College of Nursing³ published a position statement on person-centred care that provides the following definition:

Person-centred care means:

- treating each person as an individual
- protecting a person's dignity
- respecting a person's rights and preferences
- developing a therapeutic relationship between the care provider and care recipient which is built on mutual trust and understanding.

2 World Health Organization, Service organizations and integration, <https://www.who.int/teams/integrated-health-services/clinical-services-and-systems/service-organizations-and-integration>

3 Australian College of Nursing. (2020). Person-Centred Care, <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/position-statement-person-centred-care.pdf>

Facets of person-centred care⁴



Fast access to reliable healthcare advice

Access to the right services at the right time is essential for high quality care that meets individuals' needs. Access includes ease of scheduling appointments; minimal waiting for referrals or treatment; and availability of appropriate professionals and advice. Fast, easy access is important both for routine care and unplanned crises.



Effective treatment by trusted professionals

Positive therapeutic relationships are at the heart of person-centred care. People should receive clinically appropriate and effective care that meets their needs and is respectful of their preferences. Interactions with care professionals should inspire a sense of confidence and trust.



Continuity of care and smooth transitions

Care journeys bring people into contact with a range of providers and staff. Ensuring these transitions are seamless is vital to person-centred, coordinated care. All people should experience continuity in information; in the relationships they have with staff; and in the way their care is managed.



Involvement and support for family and carers

Providers and staff must acknowledge the importance of people's families, carers, friends, and wider support networks in their overall health and wellbeing. Their involvement should be welcomed and supported. The emotional impact of caring responsibilities should not be underestimated: carers need to feel supported throughout.



Clear information, communication, and support for self-care

People using health and care services should receive reliable, high quality, and accessible information at every stage in their journey. Information should be provided at appropriate times, in an understandable way, and should support people to make informed decisions and manage their own care.

⁴ The Picker Principles of Person-Centred Care, <https://picker.org/who-we-are/the-picker-principles-of-person-centred-care/>



Involvement in decisions and respect for preferences

People have the right to be involved in and to make decisions about their health and care. Providers should work with people in equal, reciprocal partnerships, and should respect people's choices and preferences – including but not limited to those that reflect their background, social, and cultural values.



Emotional support, empathy, and respect

Person centred care demands a caring and holistic approach. People providing care should show empathy and respect, recognising an individual's emotional needs. For care to be compassionate it must be delivered with respect, sensitivity, and appreciation of the person as an individual.



Attention to physical and environmental needs

People deserve to be treated and cared for in safe, comfortable environments that afford them privacy and dignity. Similarly, care professionals should be mindful of people's physical needs – including pain management, assistance with activities, and personal care.

Principles of person-centred care

Key principles of person-centred care include⁵:

Respect and dignity

Healthcare practitioners listen to and honour person and family perspectives and choices. Patient and family knowledge, values, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds are incorporated into the planning and delivery of care.

Information sharing

Healthcare practitioners communicate and share complete and unbiased information with patients and families in ways that are affirming and useful. Patients and families receive timely, complete, and accurate

information to effectively participate in care and decision-making.

Participation

Patients and families are encouraged and supported in participating in care and decision-making at the level they choose.

Collaboration

Patients, families, healthcare practitioners, and healthcare leaders collaborate in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation; in facility design; in professional education; and in research; as well as in the delivery of care.

⁵ Adapted from Johnson BH & Abraham MR. (2012). Partnering with patients, residents, and families: A resource for leaders of hospitals, ambulatory care settings, and long-term care communities. Bethesda, MD: Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care.

Indigenous health as a priority

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Australia) and Māori (Aotearoa New Zealand) experience care that recognises their unique cultural identities and addresses the significant health inequities and lower life expectancy of their peoples.

What is consumer engagement?

Consumer engagement is the process of working with people (partnering) who act to represent the broad views of specific health groups or community-wide issues and involving them in decision-making. At the RACP, consumer engagement refers to the systematic involvement of consumers in planning, implementation, delivery, and evaluation of strategic priorities.⁶

Why are person-centred care and consumer engagement important?

- There is strong evidence in the literature supporting the benefits of person-centred care.
- There is increased physician commitment to person-centred care and associated competencies.
- There are changing expectations from community and regulatory bodies around consumer engagement and person-centred care.

- There is an opportunity for the RACP to improve its community connection and credibility.
- Ethics and democracy – participating in decisions that impact on people’s own health is an ethical and democratic right.
- Improved health outcomes – engagement improves health outcomes for both individual and policy outcomes (CCE – Consumer and Community Engagement, provides policy makers with a users’ perspective).
- Improved service delivery – engagement ensures health services are delivered effectively and closely targeted to people’s needs.
- Improved relationships – with health consumers, other services, and the broader community.
- The person-centred approach treats each person respectfully as an individual human being, and not just as a condition to be treated. It involves seeking out and understanding what is important to the patient, their families, carers, and support people, fostering trust and establishing mutual respect.⁷

⁶ Adapted from the Health Consumers NSW - Health consumer engagement - Health Consumers NSW (hcnsw.org.au).

⁷ Adapted from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care – Person-Centred Care Approach

The RACP

RACP vision and role

The RACP's vision is "World-class specialist physicians creating a healthier and more equitable future."

This is underpinned by the three roles of the RACP:

Educate – through the RACP we work together to educate and train the next generation of specialists to deliver quality care.

Advocate – our specialists work together to develop and advocate for policies that promote the interest of our profession, our patients, and our community.

Innovate – we collaborate to lead innovation in the delivery of specialist medicine in a constantly changing world and support innovative medical research through our Foundation.

"I guess the utopian vision is that we are plugged into the community in much more effective ways for our training and our policy. Now whether that requires community members on committees, or whether we're plugged in, in other ways, to the community as well I think is something that's a practical question [...], but you'd want to have that interconnectivity."

MEMBER

"my vision is that the College is an influential and effective organisation because of its community engagement."

MEMBER

RACP strategic focus areas

The [RACP 2022–2026 Strategic Plan](#) | 2022–2026 Mahere Rautaki defines where the RACP wants to be in the future. It identifies four strategic focus areas to achieve the strategic goals.





Sustainable College | He Kāreti toitū

We will govern and operate in a responsible, sustainable and effective manner.



Member experience and belonging | Wheako mema me te ūkaipō

We will deliver valuable member experiences, responsive to members' unique and changing needs.



Physician and practice of the future | Kaimātai me te mahi ā mua

We will create and support the next generation of physicians for the future of medicine and community health needs.



Equitable and healthier communities | Ngā hāpori matatika, hāpori hauora

We will lead change for better health and wellbeing across our profession, populations, and healthcare systems.

How will the RACP improve person-centred care and consumer engagement?

Support effective practice of person-centred care by trainees and physicians to enable excellent healthcare experiences and healthier communities.

Ensure meaningful and systematic consumer engagement across RACP activities.

Who are the RACP's key partners?

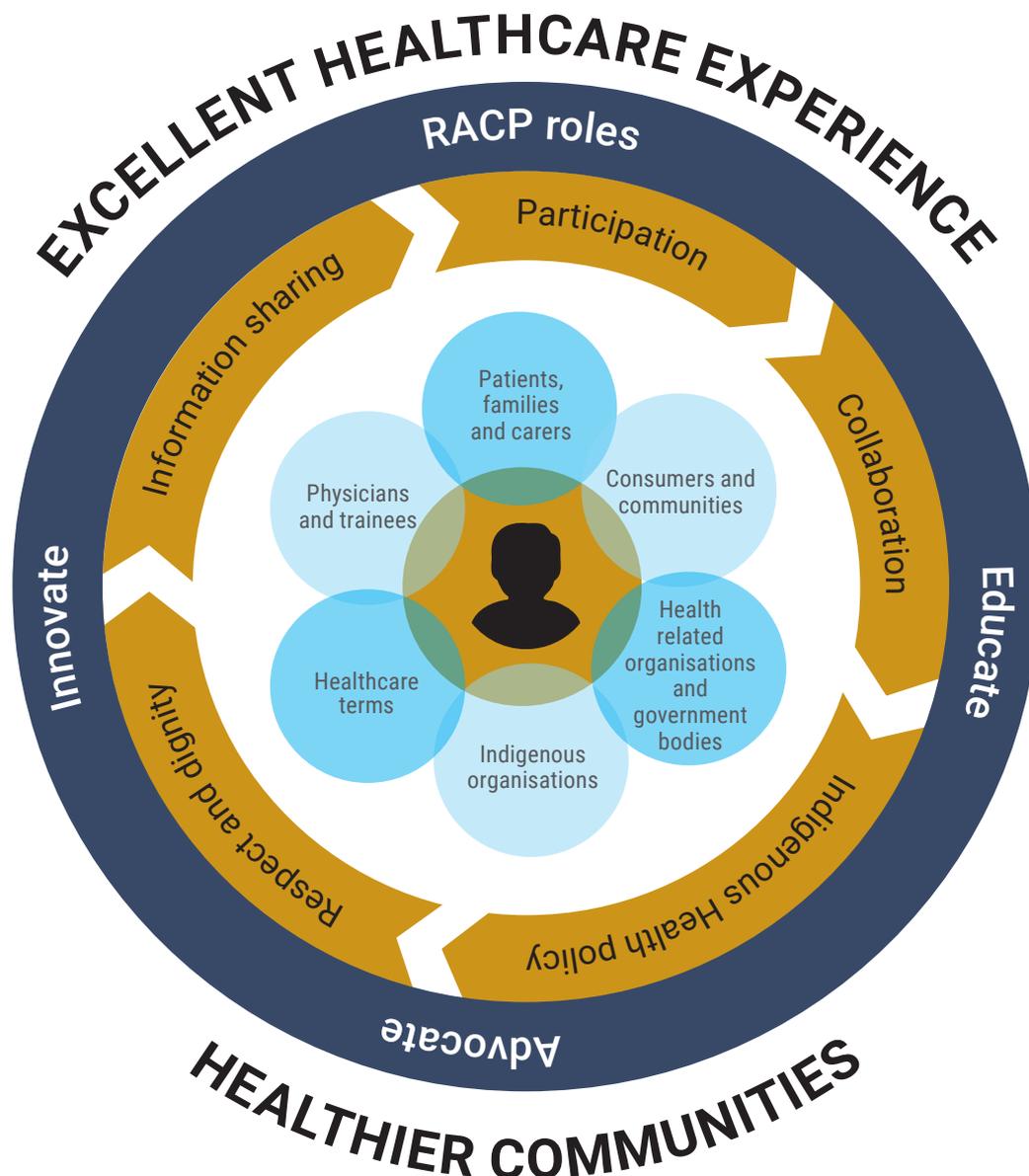
Previous work undertaken to support the implementation of the Framework recognised that collaborative partnerships are required with:

- physicians and trainees
- patients, families, and carers
- consumers and communities
- health-related organisations and government bodies
- Indigenous organisations
- healthcare teams.

“I would want [the] physician to have current skills, up to date information, etc. But I would like them to BE capable of understanding what it is like to be a patient, capable of listening with respect, able to think outside of the box, capable of being an advocate, capable of seeing patients and their families and friends as part of the team and capable of acknowledging mistakes and uncertainties.”

CONSUMER

RACP Framework for improving person-centred care and consumer engagement



“I would like to see a health system where patient lived experience is taken into consideration when care plans are written. This could avoid instances of missed medications during a hospital stay. Very often a patient knows more about their chronic health condition and the medications used than a clinician realises. I would also like to see hospital policies adhered to, particularly those referring to male and female patients not having to share bays or wards. This becomes extremely important within some CALD communities.” CONSUMER

Resources

[Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights](#)

[Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights](#) (Aotearoa New Zealand)

[Code of expectations for health entities' engagement with consumers and whānau](#) (Aotearoa New Zealand)

Acknowledgements

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[The Consumer Advisory Group \(CAG\)](#) is a panel of consumer representatives brought together to strengthen the consumer voice across the College, to enable person-centered care across the College's professional standards, and to improve consumer engagement.

“...I would like to think that in 10 years' time we've got a College that is outward-looking enough to be engaging with an effective and an ongoing dialogue with the Australasian community... it's about shifting from being of necessity, somewhat inward-looking and somewhat backward-looking, to be much more outward-focused.” MEMBER

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