CONNECTING CULTURE AND CARE



Introducing Pasifika people

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PASIFIKA?

Pasifika refers to people from Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island Maori, Fijian, Niuean, and other Pacific Island backgrounds. Each of these Pacific nations has their own language and culture.

WHAT MIGHT BE IMPORTANT?

Pasifika people are very diverse – with differences across nationalities, generations, and whether they were born and raised in New Zealand, as well the little individual differences that make us all unique. Some values that may be important include:

- Respect. We can show respect in many ways – through our body language, how we dress, talk, and provide opportunities for people to take the lead. Not making eye contact can be a sign of respect in Pasifika cultures.

- Relationships. We tend to think we are working with the client as an individual. The person you are working with may have a sense of self that is very much connected with their wider family.

- Roles. Be sensitive to family roles. There may roles among family members that influence who makes decisions and who is appropriate to be involved in things related to the client's body. For example, traditionally it would be inappropriate for a Tongan sister to be involved in her brother's physical care.

Simple tips

Take your shoes off

It's polite to take your shoes off at the door. Your host may be polite and tell you not to worry, but the best bet is to take your shoes off anyway!

Be respectful of beliefs

Christianity is very strong in the Pasifika communities. Regardless of your own beliefs, be respectful and avoid language such as "oh my God".

Check in

Talk it over before you make physical contact. Bodily care can be very distressing if it goes against beliefs about who is appropriate to be involved (for example because of gender).

Hospitality

Providing food and drink can be an important part of being a good host. Even if you don't drink or eat all that is offered, it may help to form a relationship if you say yes to that cup of tea.

Understanding dementia

Some Pasifika people, particularly those raised in the Pacific Islands, may not be familiar with the concept of dementia. It can be very difficult to understand the explanations of the diagnosis, especially if there are language barriers.

Some Pasifika family members may feel guilt or shame about care services and not being able to provide all the care for their loved one themselves.

> "I never heard dementia in my country –we don't have dementia and we don't have all the rest homes, all those facilities because our culture is, they took care of us when they were young so it's our obligation to take care of them when they are old. . .
> We have old people who are like forgetting things or acting out – regressions. But we call it second childhood. But we understand that, we think it's part of ageing.

Some helpful phrases

Language	"Hello"		"Thank you"		"Goodbye"	
	Phrase	Pronunciation	Phrase	Pronunciation	Phrase	Pronunciation
Samoan	**Talofa lava**	TAH-law-fah LA-VA	**Fa'afetai lava**	FAH-ah-feh-TIE LA-VA	**Tofa soifua**	Tor-FAH soy-FOO-ah
Tongan	**Malo e lelei**	MAH-law eh leh-LAY	**Malo**	MAH-law	**Nofo ā**	Nor-for AH
Cook Island Maori	**Kia orana**	KEE-ah or-RAH-NA	**Meitaki**	MAY-tah-key	**Aere ra** **E no'o ra**	ah-EH-REH rah EH-nor-or rah
Fijian	**Bula vinaka**	BULL-ah vee-NAH-KA	**Vinaka**	vee-NAH-KA	**Ni sa moce**	NEE sa mor-THEH
Niuean	**Fakalofa lahi atu**	fah-ka-LAW-fah LA-hee AH-too	**Fakaue lahi**	fah-ka-OW-eh LA-hee	**Kia monuina**	KEE-ah MOR-noo-ee-NAH

Pronunciation tips:

- **Vowel sounds** a, e, i, o, u are the same as Maori
- **An apostrophe** is a glottal stop which sounds like the gap in 'uh-oh'
- **In Samoan and Tokelauan** a written 'g' is said 'ng' as in the word 'sing'
- **In Fijian a** written 'b' is said as 'mb' in 'member', 'd' as 'nd' in 'Monday', 'q' as 'ng with 'g' as in 'finger', 'g' as 'ng' as in 'singer', and 'c' as 'th' as in 'father'

Your Pasifika clients and families won't expect you to know everything about Pasifika culture, but they will appreciate that you are making an effort. Lead with your heart.
If you would like to know more about working with Pasifika people, then Le Va is a great place to start at LeVa.co.nz .
Much of this introduction is based on the resources and training offered by Le Va.