A summary of @MarieMcInerney’s Twitter thread from a presentation by Ben Gorrie (@IamBGorrie) #GiantThreads19. What giant steps can we take towards Cultural Safety?

This four-page compilation was produced for Croakey News, November 2019.

Tweet text begins: Instead of speaker bio in this session, we’re having ‘dream dinner guest’. @IamBGorrie wants to spend the day cooking in Spain with (Melbourne-based vegan chef) @shannon_martinez

Hearing how important is the Acknowledgement of Country to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people - Also when you're introducing yourself, yes your job title is important, but who are you, he says, outlining his cultural and family ties.

Cultural safety is intrinsic to saving lives and providing good care:

@IamBGorrie urges delegates to think about what they can do to provide that. “What giant steps can you take”?

@IamBGorrie talking about his grandmother, a member of the Stolen Generations. His dad and sister did lot of work to get records of her time in foster care, difficult to read because of the “language used, the words she was called”.

His g'mother so protective of her son after he was taken away once, even hid near a black snake: "being taken away was worse than being bitten. @iamBgorrie 's dad taught him resilience, after strong role in govt: That he he could live & work in that system."

Health professionals played a signifant role in the harm caused by colonisation on Aboriginal people, says @IamBGorrie - blatant racism in interpersonal and institutional interactions.

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“We still have nurses who remember having to deny their Aboriginality to be accepted for training the workforce. Plus working in white systems that don't understand the knowledge, values, cultural strengths of Aboriginal people.”
Building a safe system recognises it's core business for every part of the health system. Not just clinicians, but cleaners, admin staff, board, executives. A culturally safe system is where wider health system understands its complicity in culturally unsafe care.

Cultural safety is very different to cultural awareness. Latter “others us” by examining us and persists with idea that “we’re all the same” amid very different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

In a dominant culture, your identity is constantly reaffirmed without you knowing. We all have to interrogate why do we do things the way we do.

@IamBGorrie on cultural safety: need to be explicitly and proactively anti-racist. Challenge to health services to have an anti-racism policy: what measurements would it need, what performance standards?

It's harder sometimes to be an "undercover brother", says @IamBGorrie, of not always being known in the workplace as being Aboriginal. "In most of my workplaces I've had to sit there and hear people talk about Aboriginal patients...."

"Calling racism out is hard...but if you could give it a go, that would be really good." @IamBGorrie urges #GiantSteps19 session.

@IamBGorrie flies regularly, often goes to the lounge, is rarely checked on arrival. The one time he went with his Dad, he was. #GiantSteps19 "Pretty certain that person didn't explicitly want to 'pick on a black person, but it felt pretty awful."

Four main themes from @IamBGorrie on cultural safety: 1) Cultural Safety, 2) Being anti-racist, 3) working on partnerships and 4) workforce development.

Whether or not a health service is culturally safe is not judged by the provider, but by the recipient of care. Means ensuring the building is designed around the needs of the users, particularly those most in need of safe and effective health services.

To do this, needs meaningful engagement with Aboriginal community organisations, services and individuals in ways that are relevant to their circumstances, concerns and priorities, and that minimise the risk of overburden. Not just tick the box!

Hearing that @CATSINaM is a small org that has a big impact, but culturally safe care cannot be left solely to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: "We are only 3 per cent".

“Don't think about it as a discharge summary, think about it as a clinical handover to primary care.”

Ask, "Who is going to be looking after you when you go home, what will you need?". Ongoing big issues for people discharged to remote communities who sit at bus stations or airports for hours because no-one knows they're coming. Not just remote areas, we hear, also in regional.
Hearing of the racism faced in the health sector not just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers, clinicians and patients, but international medical professionals.

Yes, says, @IamBGorrie - also harm experienced by people from other communities, including CALD, LGBTIQ - it's about power and dominant culture issues.

Two Qs from the audience: "How can we learn strong cultural stories? Do you have any good simple lines when you see explicit/implicit racism, how to call out, when we often get paralysed in the moment".

Engage really closely with the local community, history, stories, language, says @IamBGorrie - "meaningful and respectful engagement with local orgs." There will be a cost involved too - need to resource.

Q: "What can I do to make sure I'm providing culturally safe care?" Check yourself on racism and implicit bias, says @IamBGorrie. There’s already a power imbalance (you in uniform, patient in gown): what other imbalances might there be?

"Do you feel culturally safe?" @IamBGorrie has never seen that Q asked in the People Matters survey - a challenge to @VicGovDHHS

"If we can recruit and retain more Aboriginal health professionals then we not only increasing the chances that Aboriginal patients will receive culturally safe care, but are also transforming the lives of these health professionals and their families"

Q: “What are practical things we can do to improve cultural safety from tomorrow?” A: Get your staff to do cultural safety training. If $ an issue, get managers, "those who drive change" to do it.

Grow your Aboriginal workforce: be flexible and understand what skills people bring that may compensate for "a couple of points missing from ATAR". Have ongoing employment - identify positions and pathways.

Engage with the Indigenous health peaks, they offer formal training and much experience: @CATSINaM @AIDAAustralia @NATSIHWA @IAHA_National, says @IamBGorrie

Cultural awareness training has its role, "but it’s a very comfortable exercise that in a way pathologises Aboriginal people". Cultural safety is "looking at you (non Indigenous people", what makes you how you are, your assumptions, how that translates into practice.

View Ben Gorrie's interview with Marie McInerney here.