

The cultural iceberg

Transcript

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I went to talk about the cultural iceberg. And I'm throwing this up here, because I think it's a very common tool that many of you might've encountered in social research and understanding identity, but, essentially if you look at the iceberg, you'll see at the top of an iceberg, as we all know, is, it's quite magnificent. It's very visual. And until we know better, we think that's it. But obviously underneath the iceberg is where the depth lies.

And when you were dealing with CALD communities and young children often we might just be guided by the exterior and what we're seeing on the periphery, which is maybe the race of the child, perhaps the faith of the child. And they might be having several siblings and so that's our understanding of that. And maybe they're from that region of Melbourne or Sydney or the east coast, or whatever.

What lies beneath is really nuanced. And the nuance isn't very clear. And obviously a lot of these rules might go beyond the realm of dealing with just, you know, within an early childhood environment, but they're very, very important dealing with communities that you're going to be engaging with. And when you're dealing with young children and then when you're dealing subsequently with their parents, then you are, by definition, dealing with communities. It's important to understand that what lies beneath the iceberg is often what matters most when it comes to modifying behaviour expectations, course-correcting, dealing with trauma, dealing with mental health issues. And so much of that will be better understood by you as a professional and enable you to respond better when you acknowledged the nuance beneath. And that comes with rapport building and that comes with time.

And that comes with building expectation and building relationships and fostering a better positive relationship, both with families and with the children where it's required.

But I think for too long, not just in the education space, but I would say even in the health and community space, there's been a focus on responding and planning and mitigating against problems based on what's on the surface of the iceberg. And as a result, we don't actually see sustainable and meaningful change in outcomes.