Cultural diversity in South Africa

This module will focus on:

- cultural diversity in South Africa
- diverse cultural norms and values in relation to personal and community issues
- influence of cultural norms and values on individual behaviours, attitude and choices: cultural expectations, practices and traditions
- understanding diverse cultures recognition of diverse cultures to enrich South African society
- respect difference: culture, religion and gender
- celebrate unity in diversity: respect difference and celebrate similarity
- contributions to social development by organisations from various religions
- participation in an outdoor recreational activity
- participation and movement performance in an outdoor recreational activity.

By the end of this module, you should be able to:

- identify some of your own cultural norms and values and say how they influence your behaviour and decision-making
- share information about your own cultural expectations, practices and traditions and know more about other cultures
- recognise the value of different cultures and see how these contribute to the rainbow nation
- appreciate the need to respect difference
- value the role that religious organisations play in social development and identify their contributions to your community.
- participate in an outdoor recreational activity
- participate and take part in movement performance in an outdoor recreational activity.

South Africa is made up of many different cultural groups and it is important for us to learn more about these groups and respect them. Our Constitution upholds the value of equality for culture, religion and gender. You are going to explore what it means to celebrate unity in diversity. Finally, you are going to look at how organisations that are linked to different religions take on issues in communities to help them and to be part of social transformation.
The concept of cultural diversity in South Africa

Cultural diversity is when there are many different cultures living together in the same place. Cultural diversity is becoming more common worldwide, as people move to different places to find work, study opportunities and to experience living in a different town, city or country. South Africa is made up of various cultural groups because, for hundreds of years, people have moved to South Africa from other parts of Africa, Europe, Asia and even North and South America and Australasia.

What makes up culture? Ideas, traditions and behaviours all make your culture. This includes the way you are brought up, the history you are taught, the religion you practise and the ways that you express yourself – through language, dress, dance, music, games, art and food.

Diverse cultural norms and values in relation to personal and community issues

Norms and values are different to different people and cultures. For example, some people may value the time they spend with others the most, while others may prefer to keep letters and presents from those they care about. This doesn’t mean that one person’s norms and values should be seen as more important as someone else’s. In fact, our Constitution recognises the importance of the right to be different, but at the same time having the responsibility to respect others’ choices.

What is important, is that you use your norms and values to guide your behaviour and your decision making. If you have been taught that it is not right to talk about someone behind their back, you shouldn’t do so – even when others think it is okay.

Norms and values also influence how your community feels about issues. For example, your community might meet regularly to pick up litter and keep the streets and parks in your neighbourhood clean because this is an important value for the members.

Influence of cultural norms and values on individual behaviour, attitude and choices: cultural expectations, practices and traditions

The cultural norms and values you are exposed to affect the way you behave, your attitude towards life, as well as the choices you make. Every day you will do things that are influenced by cultural norms and behaviour, and sometimes you won’t even realise it. There are other times when you will carry out a specific practice or tradition as part of a celebration or ritual.
A cultural expectation is the way in which you are expected to behave or something that you are expected to do in your culture. An example of a cultural expectation is that some cultures value the importance of women and men, but expect women to be responsible for certain tasks and men for others. In some households it might be frowned upon if you are a boy and you offer to help clean up after a meal, while in other households a child would be moaned at by their parents if they didn't offer to help, regardless of whether they were a boy or a girl.

A practice is a custom that is carried out within your culture. An example of a cultural practice might be that when an elder enters the room, you stand to greet them. Another culture might encourage younger members to sit on the floor and avoid eye contact with elders as a way of showing respect.

A tradition is a ritual. All cultures have different traditions to celebrate or recognise important occasions. While some cultures may celebrate success with a glass of sparkling wine, other cultures do not drink at all.

To appreciate the cultures around you, you need to understand them as much as possible. Learn from each other about what cultural expectations, practices and traditions are common in your community and you will be able to respect and appreciate others' behaviour, attitudes and choices.

Activity 1.1 How do my cultural norms and values influence me?

1. Read the following case study and answer the questions that follow.

Lerato and David

Lerato and David have been going out for three months. Lerato's parents say that it's fine for her to have a boyfriend, as long as they are always in the company of other people when they see each other. David wants to spend some time alone with Lerato and has asked her to visit him at home when his parents are at work. Lerato respects her parents and doesn't want to disobey them, but she doesn't want to lose David.

a) Lerato's parents have expressed a cultural norm and value to her. What have they asked? (1)
b) Why do you think they would make this request? (2)
c) What do you think that Lerato should do? (2)

2. Write a paragraph describing your culture and give four examples of norms and values that you respect. (8)

3. a) List two situations in which your culture has influenced your behaviour or decision making. (2)
b) Discuss one cultural issue that has had an impact on your community. Say how it has affected people. (4)

Total: 19 marks