**Assessment 2**

**Capability Statement**

**Student no. 22153880**

My name is Syeda Wardah Tahir. I have done my bachelors in dentistry from University of Health Sciences; Lahore and I am a registered dentist in Pakistan. Currently I am in the final semester of Master of Public Health at Western Sydney University and specifically looking to be a part of a Public Health Officer position in NSW Health, where I would like to assist in health policy development, safety, and equity through evidence-based interventions. My academic and clinical years have instilled in me a deep respect and understanding for population health needs particularly diverse and vulnerable communities. My experience is varied in nature and includes clinical dentistry, regulatory interaction, digital marketing, and working in a research environment. My goal is firm in pursuing a health policy career, with a view to working first with NSW Health.

My professional values are rooted in empathy, cultural humility, and integrity, these principles reflect the ethical and interpersonal foundations required for effective, inclusive health care and public health practice. These values guide my interactions with patients, stakeholders, and communities, ensuring that I prioritise dignity, respect, and responsiveness in diverse settings. Working as a dentist in a teaching hospital in Pakistan, I routinely provided care to patients who originated in communities with limited resources. I prioritized transparency and informed consent and respect for patients' dignity, especially in emergency cases.(Menendez J. B.et al. 2013) An example of an ethical challenge involved a young patient who was brought in by a family whose language was Pashto, a language that was not spoken by most of the clinical team. Instead of continuing with poor communication, I consulted a fellow clinician who is a Pashto language speaker to ensure clear information about the procedure was transmitted to the family. This move was in line with autonomy and exhibited cultural sensitivity and respect (Betancourt et al., 2016).

At SafeWork NSW as an intern, I am practicing ethical stakeholder consultation through developing materials and communications and respecting the values and culture of the organization while ensuring accessibility and inclusivity. I believe in clear commitment to Code of Ethical Practice for Public Health (APHRA, 2022), with a strong emphasis on transparency, fairness, and respect towards vulnerable groups. Additionally, a process of reflection on ethical concerns to inform decision-making is a critical competency in public health professionals working with varied population groups. For example, when designing presentation for a violence in hospital prevention program, I used images carefully avoiding victim-blaming or stigmatizing and ensuring that language used took account of front-line workers' lived experience. This maintained respectful interaction and was in line with health equity principles.

Applying Bourdieu (1986) theory (Carpiano R. M. et. Al.,2007), I specifically use three different types of capital in my professional work:

* The cultural capital gained through my upbringing in Saudi Arabia, moving for my professional studies in Pakistan, and continued stay in Australia is a testament to my good grasp of intercultural norms and traditions. I have fluency in Hindi, Urdu, and English and am able to grasp Arabic, thus presenting myself as a good communicator across language and cultural differences (Williams et al., 2019).
* Professional participation in SafeWork NSW and Humans of Purpose has reinforced my social capital through building strong networks in government, community, and digital spaces. These networks enable collaboration and coordination in strategic planning necessary to ensure successful implementation of public health interventions (McGill et al. 2021).
* Intellectual Capital: This is reflected in my academic achievement, digital literacy, and a continued orientation towards scholarly work. Currently, I am working on peer reviewed piece as a co-author on long-term symptom control in head and neck cancer.

My academic knowledge in epidemiology, biostatistics, control of communicable diseases, health promotion, and policy influenced my work both in an applied and a regulatory capacity.(AIHW,2020) Since joining SafeWork NSW, principles of systems thinking (WHO, 2022) and social determinants of health (Thornton R. L et.al., 2016) have been applied to assessing interventions aimed to prevent violence in healthcare and social care settings. I assisted in formulating frameworks to evaluate process measures, e.g., stakeholder engagement, and outcome measures, e.g., compliance improvements.

As a digital marketer at Humans of Purpose, I created content and communication strategies for non-profit organisations. It strengthened my digital communication and stakeholder engagement skills that are transferable to public health advocacy. I have also been part of health promotion initiative while working as a dentist for children between the ages of 5 and 12 through interactive sessions based on storytelling and demonstration to promote oral health.

My key strengths include:

* **Good communication and listening skills are vital:** Through the internship experience at SafeWork NSW, I used effective communication and active listening skills to work with a range of stakeholders to enable campaign evaluation.
* **Cultural competence and empathy:** My clinical experience in Pakistan has developed cultural competence and empathy, and my work with multicultural communities in Western Sydney has continued to strengthen these.
* **Dependability and accountability in team-based environment:** demonstrated through my consistent contribution to team projects at SafeWork NSW and timely delivery of assigned outputs.
* **Public speaking and facilitation of groups:** exemplified in dental health promotion sessions for children aged 5–12 and academic presentations during my MPH program.
* **Stakeholder engagement and digital marketing practice**: achieved through strategic content development along with coordination of communication within social impact campaigns at Humans of Purpose.
* **Research and writing for diverse audiences**: It is demonstrated in my co-authored publication on symptom management in head and neck cancer, and in the structured policy briefs created in my public health courses.

One area of weakness that I am actively working on is my ability to say ‘NO’ when asked for support and assistance. While this may show my cooperative nature, but this often leads to taking on several tasks which may cause overburden and detract from overall team effectiveness. (Filomeno et.al.,2023) I am developing strategies such as assertive communication, setting professional boundaries and actively seeking feedback from mentors and peers to encourage collaboration, build my confidence, and increase project results.

**My Areas of Expertise are:**

**Clinical and Public Health Integration** – My hospital-based dental practice equipped me with practical skills to care for patients from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, fostering empathy and clinical judgement.

**Health Policy and Regulatory Engagement** – At SafeWork NSW, I am co-developing and evaluating public health campaigns aligned with WHS regulatory priorities, addressing violence in healthcare and disability sectors.

**In research and publication**, I am co-authoring with colleagues on a research paper that discusses the long-term management of symptoms related to head and neck cancer.

**Online marketing** and stakeholder outreach are areas where I lead marketing efforts and manage communications with non-profit organizations, thus promoting greater coordination among stakeholders.

**Public Speaking and Health Promotion** – I have taught final year Dental students, participated in health promotional campaigns, and presented group findings during MPH projects, sharpening my ability to communicate clearly and persuasively.

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