

CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN KARATE

Practical guidance for clubs and instructors



A culturally inclusive club does not need to know everything about every community. It needs to listen, remove avoidable barriers and make belonging visible.

Insight

2 in 5

2 in 5 people from ethnically diverse communities felt they have fewer opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity than someone from a white background.

© 2026 Buddle. - Ethnically diverse communities

People from different ethnic, cultural and faith backgrounds are not one audience.

Someone's experience of karate can be shaped by their local community, previous experiences of sport, faith, family, finances, language, whether they see people like themselves represented, and whether a club feels welcoming when they first encounter it.

The most effective way to understand your community is not to assume what people need. Ask, listen and build relationships.

Barriers

- **"I don't see people like me here"**
Limited representation in members, coaches, communications or leadership can make a club feel unfamiliar.

- **Previous negative experiences**
Racism or discrimination in sport - or elsewhere can reduce trust and confidence in joining a new environment.

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ASK THIS INSTEAD

"What is making it harder for this person or community to take part?"

FROM PRINCIPLE TO PRACTICE

Use these prompts as a starting point. The right response will always depend on the individual and the activity.



Breaking down barriers

Make first contact easy

Explain what to wear, what a session involves, what it costs and who to speak to before someone arrives.

Ask rather than assume

If someone raises a cultural or faith consideration, ask what would help rather than deciding for them.

Be flexible where you safely can

Small changes to timing, clothing, privacy, partner selection or communication may remove an unnecessary barrier.

Challenge discrimination

Racist or discriminatory comments should not be dismissed as humour or banter. Respond and use the correct reporting route where needed.

Build relationships outside the dojo

Speak to schools, community groups and faith organisations before designing outreach for communities you want to reach.

Think beyond promotional images

Representation also means who gets opportunities to coach, volunteer, officiate, lead and influence decisions.

Put it into practice

“Can I wear this while training?”

Do not automatically say yes or no. Understand what the person needs to wear, consider the activity and work out whether it can be worn safely.

“I’m fasting but still want to train.”

Do not assume they should stop or reduce training. Ask what they want to do and whether any practical adjustment would help.

“I’d prefer not to partner with someone of the opposite sex.”

Have a respectful conversation about whether partner arrangements can reasonably accommodate this while preserving the purpose of the activity.

“We want more people from a local community to join.”

Do not begin with advertising. Begin by speaking to that community and finding out whether there is a reason people are not already coming.

Quick club check

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ People know they are welcome. | ☐ Joining information is clear and easy to find. |
| ☐ Someone can comfortably tell us what they need. | ☐ We listen before making assumptions. |
| ☐ Racism and discrimination are challenged. | ☐ We consider cost and practical access |
| ☐ Different backgrounds can progress into roles of influence. | ☐ We speak to communities we want to reach. |

If you don't feel you can check some of these, choose one area to improve rather than trying to change everything at once.

Further resources

Ethnically Diverse Communities

[Open >](#)

Engaging with Faith Groups

[Open >](#)

Race Equality in Sport

[Open >](#)

A Guide to Inclusion

[Open >](#)