Tips for engaging culturally and linguistically diverse communities

What do we mean by culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD)?

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) includes groups and individuals who differ according to religion, race, language and ethnicity, except those whose ancestry is Anglo Saxon, Anglo Celtic, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Who is in your community?

Identifying who is in your community is an essential first step to engaging with them effectively.

- What cultural groups live in your area?

- What languages do they speak?

- What is their distribution by age, gender, socioeconomic status, migration pathway, and length of time in Australia?

- What do you know about the needs of each group? How do you know? (see below for tips)

Some of the resources available from Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) website are:

- Local government profiles for all 142 WA local government areas:
  www.omi.wa.gov.au/omi_local_government.cfm
- Community profiles for 30 cultural groups:
  www.omi.wa.gov.au/omi_statistics_community_profiles.cfm
- Culture and religion sheets for Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism:
  www.omi.wa.gov.au/omi_guidelines.cfm
- Cultural and linguistically diverse young people in WA profile:
  www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/omi_youth.cfm
- Ageing in culturally and linguistically diverse communities:
  www.omi.wa.gov.au/omi_publications.cfm?pg=5

How do you find out community needs?

There are a number of ways to learn more about the needs of the communities you will be working with.

- Research publications to find out general issues.

- Talk to people, for example, at:

  - o the local government authority near you—they usually have a Community Engagement/Community Development team

  - o community-led events

  - o schools

  - o gathering spaces such as churches/mosques/temples, shopping malls, community centres and other agencies that work with CaLD communities.

- Identify key people such as:

  - o community leaders

  - o agency staff

  - o bilingual/bicultural workers

  - o community volunteers.

Resources available from the OMI website include:

- Community events calendar:
  www.omi.wa.gov.au/omi_events.cfm

- Ethnic and cultural groups directory:
  www.omi.wa.gov.au/omi_db_organisations.cfm

The OMI website also has links to the:

- Department of Social Services 'Calendar of Cultural and Religious Dates'

- Multifaith Calendar

Is your service design and delivery appropriate?

The design and delivery of your service is critical to ensuring that CaLD people feel included. In assessing this, you may want to consider the following points.

- Does your organisational staff profile reflect the community you are working with? How culturally diverse is your staffing profile?

- Have your staff done cultural awareness training? This can be online or face-to-face.

- Is your programming and service model flexible? For example:
    - Do you have the option of after-hours and/or weekend service or could you provide an outreach service if needed?
    - Is there a need to provide a crèche for clients while they visit your service?

- Have you included the cost of language services in your budget? You might need to access telephone and face-to-face interpreting (by accredited or trained interpreters). Note that:
    - you need to allow enough time for interpreting. For example, if the appointment is usually 20 minutes, schedule double the time to allow for interpreting
    - some terminology may not be understood or may not exist in the language being translated
    - if the community group is small, or a dialect is not widely used, there could be a limited number of interpreters available and some may be in a different State. Some may be known to the client, which could lead to confidentiality issues.

- Have you considered how best to deliver the service to the client group? For example, 'one-on-one' or in a group? If group work is the method, is it appropriate for it to be mixed gender or a mix of cultural groups, or would it be best to customise the groups?

You can access OMI's online cultural competency training at: www.diversewa.omi.wa.gov.au

The Department of Finance has a Common Use Arrangement for Interpreting and Translating that lists a range of agencies that provide interpreting and translation services. This is available at www.contractswa.finance.wa.gov.au/index.jsp

How is the service promoted to CaLD groups?

Understanding how to best reach the people you want to work with is vital.

- Do you identify your target audience and develop the most effective and targeted approaches to communicate the information in consultation with key people and agencies?

- Have you identified opportunities for partnerships with other organisations, associations and networks, local governments, State or Commonwealth Government agencies and non-government agencies that could assist with promotion?

- Are you using a mix of approaches such as face-to-face, online and social media, print media, posters and radio commentary and advertising? Strategies could include:

  o information stalls at community festivals and events, community information sessions or workshops

  o targeted distribution of written resources such as posters, stickers, cards, information sheets and pamphlets in languages other than English

  o community language voice-overs and/or pre-recorded audio and audiovisual materials and community messages and advertisements through government and community CaLD-targeted radio or television.

- Do you include the interpreter symbol in your information and promotional brochures and flyers?

Do you monitor and evaluate your service regularly?

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is essential to continuous improvement and ensuring you are meeting the changing needs of the community.

- Do you regularly collect data on the clients you are servicing?

- Do you gather feedback on the effectiveness of your service? For example, keeping in contact with community leaders and bilingual/bicultural workers to gain feedback or recording or using simple feedback forms?

- Do you use the client feedback to make changes to your programs and practices?

You can access a guide to cultural and linguistic data collection on the OMI website at: www.omi.wa.gov.au/publications/omi_data_collection.cfm