



MULTICULTURAL
ACCESS PROJECT
NETWORK

A Guide for Home and Community Care (HACC) Services: Enhancing Access for Diverse Cultural Communities

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Australia has one of the most culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse populations in the world. As a nation, we speak over 300 languages, practice over 100 religions, and originate from over 230 countries (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008). Whilst such diversity has brought many positive developments and enriches the Australian society culturally, economically and socially, it also raises many challenges.

In particular, aged and community care providers are increasingly pressured to enhance their capacity to respond to the needs of our rapidly growing aged culturally diverse population.

This guide brings together ideas and resources from various human service sectors. It aims to assist Home and Community Care (HACC) and other service providers to develop an overall idea regarding what they have achieved in the area of cultural diversity and provide some directions for further development.

Using this Guide

This guide is suitable for organisations of different sizes to use as an in house resource, or for networks of services to use as a tool for specific target groups. It provides:

- i) an overview of the six key development areas in relation to supporting diverse cultural communities;
- ii) a checklist for service providers and organisations to examine their current practices; and
- iii) some practical tips for workers who are helping their organisations to enhance their accessibility and capacity to support people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Information about the Multicultural Access Project (MAP) Network; how the MAPs can assist your organisation; and our contacts details can be found at the end of this guide.

Training

The Z vZ v]vP •• v <μ]šÇW v K CE Pa smān grōp v o %o %o CE } Z workshop style training complimenting this guide. A facilitator will assist the participants to develop a better understanding of where their services or organisations are at in relation to cultural diversity issues; and facilitate discussions which aim to develop local practical strategies.

To find out more about resources and training opportunities, contact the MAP Officer in your area.

SUPPORTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY: THE 6 KEY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

There are many different ways to break down the key areas and tasks involved when addressing cultural diversity issues. This guide captures the issues in six key development areas:

1. Access

This key area concerns an organisation's awareness of access issues for people from diverse cultural backgrounds and its strategies to address these issues.

2. Communications

This key area covers both strategies to facilitate direct and indirect communications between an organisation and people from diverse cultural backgrounds individually and as a group.

3. Workforce

This key area looks into issues about the diversity of the workforce and its capacity to work effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

4. Consultation

This key area covers planned and unplanned as well as direct and indirect consultation with both service users and non-users.

5. Participation

This key area looks at the level of participation of people from diverse cultural backgrounds in service planning and service development.

6. Planning

This key area looks at the use of data to inform its long term development and quality improvement for people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

- ‘ We are aware of and make use of existing research and consultation reports relating to our target groups.
- ‘ We have strategies in place to encourage and support people from diverse cultural backgrounds who choose not to use our service to provide us their feedback and ideas in relation to service improvement.
- ‘ We conduct or actively participate in and support planned consultations with the key communities.
- ‘ We conduct or actively participate in and support research to enhance our understanding of the needs of and best practice models to support people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- ‘ We have strategies in place to encourage and support people from diverse cultural backgrounds to provide us feedback and comment at any point in time.

Comments:

Key Area 5: Participation

- ‘ Our service user profile reflects the cultural diversity in our area.
- ‘ Our service user profile reflects the cultural diversity of our target groups and their needs.
- ‘ We have strategies in place to encourage and support service users and their family from diverse cultural backgrounds to contribute to the development of their service plan.
- ‘ Our staff, management board, committee and volunteer profiles reflect the cultural diversity in our area.
- ‘ We have strategies in place to encourage and support service users, staff, management board members and volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds to contribute to decision regarding service and organisational development.
- ‘ We have strategies in place to encourage and support members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities to contribute to the long term service and organisational development of our organisation.

Comments:

PRACTICAL TIPS

The responsibility to address cultural diversity issues often fall on one individual within an organisation. It really takes more than an individual to make the difference. The MAP Officers can provide you with practical ideas and support you in the process. Here are just some tips to start making cultural responsiveness a reality rather than an ideal.

Tip No. 1: Build a shared vision

A shared value does not automatically lead to a shared vision. Whilst the majority of people working in the human service sector value and respect cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and agree with the importance of supporting people from diverse cultural backgrounds, the extent to which individuals are able to and/or willing to take part in cultural diversity initiatives, projects and development varies. It is judgemental in relation to their view regarding the issues and their involvement in the process. Note that being aware of our own views in regards to cultural diversity and our own limitation is also a part of cultural competent practice.

The more services an organisation provides, the more likely the views differ. It is a good idea to start the discussion at a team level where people share similar issues. It will help to identify common views across the organisation, and also differences that may present some challenges. It will also help to identify potential members for a working group.

Remember it is an opportunity for people to tell you what they think about cultural diversity. It is very helpful to understand what people in the group do, what they do well, and what challenges they face day-to-day. Positive attitudes often brings along positive outcomes.

Tip No. 2: Work as a team

It is often advised that a cultural diversity working group be established to drive this process. It is important to note that within any organisation, there are people who are responsible for cultural diversity issues, people who are experienced and have

Community representatives who are actively involved in the sector are often aware that it takes a long time to see changes. It is important that your goals are realistic and your process is transparent.

Conclusion

There are many other things that organisations can do to enhance access and equity for people from CALD backgrounds. Resource limitation is a reality, and that it is most important for organisations to review what is achievable within their existing resources. It may mean to partner with other organisations and/or community groups.

The service environment is always changing. Many great works are lost due to inadequate documentation, particularly in the area of cultural diversity, which makes it very important to have proper documentation.

The MAP Project Officers are also able to work with you to develop localised and tailored strategies and put you in touch with others working on similar issues. We look forward to working closely with you.

There are many ways the MAPs can assist service providers and organisations to enhance their capacity to support people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The activities each MAP undertakes and how each MAP address the requirement of the Key Result Areas are determined by the characteristics of their area and the input from their service providers.

Contacts

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