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

July 2009
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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 increasing 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 ‘Enhancing Access and Equity: An Organisational Approach’ is a small group 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 concerns an organisation’s ability to utilise demographic and other data to inform its long term development and quality improvement for people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
A CHECKLIST

This checklist assists service providers and organisations to develop an overall idea about what they have already achieved in relation to addressing cultural diversity issues. It also provides some directions for further development.

There are six broad statements in each of the key development areas. Put a tick in the box for each statement that reflects the practice of your organisation or service.

**Key Area 1: Access**

☐ A cultural diversity statement is found in all our organisational documents.

☐ A cultural diversity or multicultural policy is available and included in our organisational policy and procedure manual.

☐ Operational guidelines and procedures regarding working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds are available for all staff and volunteers.

☐ We are aware of the issues or barriers for people from diverse cultural backgrounds regarding accessing our information and/or services.

☐ We have specific programs or projects that aim to improve access to our services for people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

☐ We have strategies in place to facilitate access to our information for people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Comments:

**Key Area 2: Communications**

☐ Multilingual resources are available for members of the major communities.

☐ Multilingual resources are available for members of smaller but growing communities.
Language support services are used by staff and/or volunteers to facilitate communications with people who prefer to speak a language other than English at all time.

Multilingual resources are available in different formats, eg large print, audio, to suit different needs.

We are aware of and utilise ethnic media to promote our services and activities.

A multicultural communication strategy is available.

Comments:

Key Area 3: Workforce

Some staff members, management board members and volunteers are delegated specific cultural diversity responsibilities.

All staff members, management board members and volunteers are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to cultural diversity.

All staff members, management board members and volunteers have access to and completed basic cultural awareness training, including training on working with professional interpreters and translators.

Staff members, management board members and volunteers have access to specific cultural diversity training as a part of their professional development and organisational quality improvement measure.

Mechanism is in place to support our staff members, management board members and volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds in the organisation.

Our workforce profile reflects cultural diversity of client group.

Comments:

Key Area 4: Consultation

We have strategies in place to encourage and support existing service users from diverse cultural backgrounds to provide us their feedback in regards to service design and development.
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:
Key Area 6: Planning

☐ We have access to and utilise demographic information about our target group to inform our planning.

☐ We collect relevant client data to inform our service development.

☐ The level of resource allocation for cultural diversity issues reflects the profile of cultural diversity in our area.

☐ A cultural diversity plan with clear identified outcomes is available and is reported on regularly.

☐ Service user, staff, board members, volunteers, industry partners and the wide community has provided input for the development of the cultural diversity plan.

☐ Cultural diversity is fully integrated into organisational strategic and development plans.

Comments:

The MAP Officers are more than happy to discuss with you regarding your current practices and future development.
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. Whist 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 important to ensure everyone can “have a say” in a safe and non-judgemental environment 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, how it impacts on their work, and what they see as “the way to go”. 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
expertise in working with cultural diversity, and people who are interested in working on cultural diversity issues. It is more important to note that these groups do not necessarily overlap with one another. It is a good idea to have a mixture of these people in the working group.

It is also a good idea to ensure members of the group possess or have access to people with the following skills:

- statistical analysis
- research and evaluation
- policy development
- training and training development

It is also important for the working group to consist of representatives from different operational areas across the organisations. Taking part in the working group may also be a great experience for some members of your organisation.

Use the following table to identify individuals within your organisation who potentially could participate in the working group, or list the members (and potential members) of the working group if it already exists. Use a tick to indicate whether the person is there because of his/her responsibility requirement, expertise or interest, or a combination of them.

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<th>Resp’ble</th>
<th>Expertise</th>
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Some organisations are large and different parts of the organisation may not be linked with one another. It is important to define the scope of the working group,
identify realistic goals for the group, and also specify how this working group relates to the wider organisational processes.

Similar to any other working groups, the cultural diversity working group needs terms of reference so that the purpose of the group and the role of its members are clear to everyone in the organisation. It is also very useful to develop a work plan which specifies the undertaking of the group, which may have 1 item or multiple items.

**Tip No. 3: Seek external expertise**

Many resources recommend cultural representation on boards and committees. This arrangement presents a number of issues. Firstly, community members are often not comfortable among a group of professionals or experts, let alone voicing their views. Secondly, it is hard for individuals to see themselves as representatives of their communities when they do not have the opportunity to communicate and listen to others. As a result, community representatives often drop out over time or become a token committee member on the list.

There are different ways to foster in community representation. The first option is to get involved with existing multicultural or cultural specific networks. Most of these networks are happy to be consulted and provide input to inform different types of service development and delivery.

The second option is to pull together a consultative forum (which can be an annual practice) inviting representatives from community groups and services. The forum needs to be informative and provide a venue for the representatives to inform the design and delivery of services. It is important to keep in mind that many cultural groups feel like they are over consulted and see little outcomes. Therefore, this option should only be used when there is not an existing network. Consider the following questions if you are intending to establish a consultative forum:

i. What is the aim of the forum?

ii. What makes the community representatives want to be a part of this forum?

iii. What can I realistically offer to these communities?
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.
THE MULTICULTURAL ACCESS PROJECT NETWORK

The Multicultural Access Projects are funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care through the Multicultural Access Program. The Multicultural Access Projects aim to assist the Home and Community Care (HACC) system and services to be more responsive to the current and future HACC service needs of diverse cultural communities; and to enhance knowledge and understanding of HACC and related services in culturally diverse communities.

The MAPs come together to form the Multicultural Access Project Network, which provides an opportunity for all MAPs to work together and to share resource, experience and expertise. Members of the MAP Networks include:

- Statewide MAP
- Bankstown/Fairfield/Liverpool MAP
- Central Coast MAP
- Cumberland/Prospect MAP
- Eastern Sydney MAP
- Inner West MAP
- Nepean MAP
- Northern Sydney MAP
- St George & Sutherland MAP

Ethnic Communities’ Council of NSW
Bankstown Area Multicultural Network
Central Coast Disability Network
Sydney West Area Health Service
Ethnic Child Care, Family and Community Services Co-op
Ethnic Child Care, Family and Community Services Co-op
Tri Community Exchange Inc
Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service
St George Migrant Resource Centre

The MAP Conference in 2009 is the first joint event of the MAP Network. It aims to provide service providers an opportunity to learn about what is happening in other parts of NSW; to share strategies; and to form and strengthen their networks.
A Model of Support

The following diagram illustrates how the three key result areas of the MAP Program relate to the six key development areas identified in this guide. The activities undertaken by the MAPs under Key Result Area 1 directly support the first three key areas identified by this model: Access, Communications and Workforce. Activities under Key Result Area 2 directly support the other three key areas identified in this model. Key Result Area 3 of the MAP Framework enables the MAPs to have direct contact with the communities that support the development in the other areas.

Diagram 1: A Model of Support
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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<tr>
<th>Bankstown Fairfield Liverpool MAP</th>
<th>Central Coast MAP</th>
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REFERENCES


