

Aged Care Diversity Framework

Resource Sheet 7 People from Cultural & Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds

Australia is a multicultural society. It is estimated that people living in Australia speak 300 languages and can claim origins from more than 250 cultures. In 2016, 37% of people aged over 65 were born overseas. Of these, 67% came from Europe and 16% from Asia with 6% reporting poor or no English. The proportion of migrants from Europe has been declining this century from 52% in 2001 to 34% in 2016. In 2021, it is likely that one third of the over 65s come from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

The effects of migration of older people from CALD backgrounds varies according to their pre-migration experience before coming to Australia, the migration process itself and their settlement experience after they arrive. Much can depend

on the circumstances and reasons behind migration, the journey here, the stage in life, the family and cultural support networks after the arrival and the cultural and lifestyle differences between their place of origin and their new place of residence.

Older people from CALD backgrounds who need access to and engagement with the aged care sector face numerous barriers. The concept of an aged care safety net itself may be new, particularly in cultures where it is the expectation that family members are the providers of all care. Not only is there a general lack of awareness of what types of aged care are available but the system is difficult to navigate, particularly for people for whom English is not their first language. Once the

system is accessed, there are further engagement barriers. Provider organisations may not be culturally sensitive and appropriate. Staff may not be culturally competent. Cultural beliefs and behaviours may lead to support preferences that providers may not recognise or have the flexibility to meet.

There are numerous resources available to providers that enable them to improve skills in responding appropriately to the access and engagement needs of older people from CALD backgrounds. The Department of Health publication, *Actions to Support Older Culturally and Linguistically Diverse People* and factsheets available on the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing are particularly helpful resources.

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General Strategies to address access and engagement challenges

- Know the cultural communities and networks in the geographical areas covered
- Ensure all direct client contact staff have participated in cultural competency training and regular refreshers. Actively employ and support bilingual workers.
- Ensure service information is culturally appropriate and easy to understand.
- Know how to and use accredited interpreters and translators wherever possible.
- Identify cultural needs and preferences in assessment, care planning and reviews.
- Engage with Multicultural Access (MAPSS) and Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) workers, local Migrant Information and Resource Centres and peak bodies like the Ethnic Communities Council in co-designing appropriate service responses.

For links to further information and resources, see **Sheet 17: Resources Nos. 4, 5, 7, 21, 24**