Bicultural Work With Refugees

Participant’s Handbook
Margaret Piper

CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Refugees in Australia
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Introduction

**Introduction**

**CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia** complements **CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants**\(^1\) and is intended for people from a refugee or migrant background who are employed by or wish to work for an agency providing services to refugees and other forced migrants. The purpose of this unit is to prepare the participants for the many challenges they will face learning about the Australian workplace and being a bicultural worker.

**Course Overview**

This course consists of **12 sessions** of **2 hours** of face-to-face instruction or equivalent. The following table outlines the course breakdown.

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\(^1\) It is highly recommended that those selecting this unit also take CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants.
Outcomes

At the completion of this unit, it is expected that you will be able to demonstrate essential knowledge required to effectively complete tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage tasks and manage contingencies in the context of the work role. This includes knowledge of:

- legal and ethical considerations (national, state/territory, local) relevant to settlement services and how these are applied in organisations and individual practice:
  - privacy, confidentiality and disclosure
  - mandatory reporting
  - conflict of interest and maintaining professional boundaries
  - discrimination
  - access and equity
  - codes of practice
- the impact of forced migration on the family and the impact of changed roles within the family
- availability of resources and assistance within, and external to, the organisation, including relevant referral networks and how to access their services
- strategies for worker to maintain their own well being and to support well being of colleagues and clients
- time management and stress management techniques
- impact and relevance of trauma and vicarious trauma.

Assessment

Performance Evidence

You will be required to show evidence of your ability to complete tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage tasks and manage contingencies in the context of the job role. At the core, there must be evidence that you have:

- provided support services to 3 groups of recently arrived migrants and refugees
- identified, supported and prioritised the needs of 2 clients or client groups demonstrating signs of trauma, and referred to appropriate specialist support services

Your teacher will provide you with additional information about the assessment task(s).
Competency

Assessment of the course is competency based. You will be assessed when you and your trainer both agree that you are ready to be assessed. You will be assessed as Competent or Not Yet Competent.

If you successfully complete the training program and are assessed as Competent, you will be awarded a Statement of Attainment from the Australian Qualifications Framework in the following unit:

CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia

If you are assessed as Not Yet Competent, you will need to arrange another assessment opportunity with your trainer.

Assessment Conditions

Skills must have been demonstrated in the workplace or in a simulated environment that reflects workplace conditions. Where simulation is used, it must reflect real working conditions by modelling industry operating conditions and contingencies, as well as, using suitable facilities, equipment and resources.

Assessment Appeals Procedures

If you wish to have your assessment results reviewed you may request this through you immediately after you have participated in the assessment. Any unresolved disputes may be referred to relevant the RTO Manager. Appeals against assessment results must be made within six months of the assessment or before the issuing of certification, whichever comes first.
About this Handbook

This Handbook has been written to assist those taking the course **CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia**. It contains:

- the core information participants need to know if they are to work as bicultural workers in the settlement sector or in a related position;
- useful tips that will enable them to be more efficient in their work;
- things that will help them to achieve the important balance between their work and their private lives;
- activities at the end of each topic which have been designed to help participants gain a better understanding of the key issues covered in that topic;
- a list of references that can be used by anyone who wants to find out more about the topic.

Course participants are encouraged to refer to this handbook often while they are undertaking the course and to keep it with them when at work so that it can be referred to when information is needed.

**Important Definitions**

| **Forced Migrants** | The term ‘forced migrants’ is not widely used in Australia but it is a very familiar term internationally. It is used to cover people who have relocated by necessity rather than choice. Unlike the term ‘refugee’ which is narrowly defined by national and international law, the term ‘forced migrant’ is wide and all-inclusive.

In the Australian context, it is a useful term to describe the principal recipients of settlement services. It succinctly embraces people who have:

- entered Australia under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program;
- been granted refugee status in Australia or an excised territory;
- entered as business and skilled migrants but where the prime motivation for leaving was to escape violence and/or persecution;
- arrived with a family reunion visa linked to anyone in the above categories.

It might also be used in the future to cover people who have been displaced because their home/homeland is no longer viable due to global warming (i.e. people who are sometimes – but erroneously - referred to as ‘environmental refugees’). |
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<td><strong>Refugee</strong></td>
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It defines a refugee as a person who:

> 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...’

| **Refugee Status** | Refugee status is granted to people who are determined to fit the definition of a refugee. Refugee status bestows certain rights on its holder, most importantly protection from being forcibly returned to their country of origin. |
| **Resettlement** | The process of identification, selection and preparation of Humanitarian Program entrants for travel to a third country (in this case, to Australia). In other words, it relates to things that predominantly happen outside Australia. |
| **Settlement** | Two equally valid definitions:  

  ... a period of adjustment that migrants experience before they can participate in Australia’s culturally diverse society.²  

  ... a long-term dynamic process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equality and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to the full human resource potential in immigrant communities.³ |
| **Settlement Sector** | There is, as yet, no clarity around exactly what is meant by 'settlement sector'. Some view it narrowly, seeing it as referring to community agencies funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS). Others argue that it is much broader, encompassing the whole field of service provision for migrants, be this government or non-government, irrespective of funding source. For the purpose of this unit, the term is used in the latter sense, though with a particular focus on services whose principal clients are forced migrants. |
| **Settlement Worker** | In this context, the term 'settlement worker' is used to cover people whose work brings them into regular contact with recently arrived forced migrants. They can work in either the government or non-government sectors. It is intended to cover not only settlement staff within DSS and services funded by DSS, but also workers in other sectors (Centrelink, health, police, employment services, youth, housing, family support etc) who deal with forced migrants. |

² As presented in (then) DIAC’s Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants (2003) and other publications.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bicultural Worker</th>
<th>Someone employed to deliver settlement-services because of their cultural and linguistic skills.</th>
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**NOTE:** definitions of other relevant terms are included in Appendix 1.
Topic 1: Setting the Scene

In Topic 1 you will:

- be told about the topics that will be covered in the unit;
- be told about the assignments you are required to complete;
- think about what you would like to learn in this course;
- be introduced to some of the things you need to know about the Australian workplace.

An Introduction to the Australian Workplace

People who grow up in Australia don't necessarily realise how much of what they do and how they relate to others is defined by Australian culture. They tend to think of it as being 'normal' – which it is - for those who are used to it – but not necessarily for people from elsewhere. The Australian workplace is like a small piece of Australian culture and what happens in the wider community also happens in the workplace. At best these can seem quite curious or amusing to those not familiar with them, at worst, they can be very confronting and threatening.

The more someone coming into the Australian workplace for the first time understands about the workplace culture, the more chance they will have to operate confidently and competently within it. To begin, we will focus on the culture of a generic workplace and then in later sessions the various issues of relevance to bicultural workers within the workplace will be considered.

Characteristics of the Australian Workplace

Every workplace is different but it is possible to point to some common cultural characteristics. These relate to:

i. Communication:

**Informality:** it is common for colleagues to relate in an informal way and to use slang when speaking to each other. It is also seen as acceptable (within reason) to talk about non-work matters.

**Socialising:** workers will often socialise at lunchtime, during breaks or after work. Participating in such activities is a good way to get to know your colleagues and for them to get to know you. This in turn might lead to better working relationships.

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4 This section has been adapted from material published by Victoria University: [https://careers.vu.edu.au/Content/Students_and_Graduates/International_Students/Australian_Workplace_Culture.chpx](https://careers.vu.edu.au/Content/Students_and_Graduates/International_Students/Australian_Workplace_Culture.chpx)
the other hand, you are asked to go somewhere you feel uncomfortable (such as a place where alcohol is served) or at a time that is inconvenient to you (e.g. when you have to collect your children from school or when it is your prayer time), it is quite alright to say no, but you should explain why so that the other people do not think you don’t want to be friendly.

**Humour:** having a sense of humour is seen as important in most workplaces. Sometimes jokes will be made at other people’s expense. This is sometimes called ‘ribbing’. A newcomer to the workplace is often a target for such antics. Humour, banter and ribbing are seen as ways to help people feel part of a team and to make the workplace more enjoyable, so are encouraged. It is important to recognise, however, that there can be a fine line between ribbing and bullying and between banter and harassment. There will be more about this later.

**Professional communication:** despite the use of informal language and humour, workers are expected to communicate in a professional manner at all times.

**Eye contact:** it is considered respectful behaviour to look someone in the eyes when speaking to them. Further, eye contact is seen as important irrespective of to whom you are speaking – peers, superiors or subordinates.

**Greetings:** when being introduced, Australians will usually shake hands and, in professional jobs, exchange business cards. People who have built up a good collegial relationship might greet each other by kissing on one or both cheeks. This can be between a man and a woman, or between women. It is rarely seen between men. If two people greet each other in such a way it does not mean that there is any kind of romantic involvement.

### ii. Hierarchy and Leadership Style

The following are seen as characteristics of the Australian workplace:

- It is usually not overly formal and hierarchical but there are clear lines of authority and decision-making.

- Workers tend to talk on an equal basis with their superiors, sometimes using humour. To someone not used to this, it could be seen as a sign of disrespect. Newcomers have to be careful not to overstep the often invisible boundaries and in the early stages of a work relationship. It is best to hold back and observe until you learn more about how your own manager interacts with people.

- Equal opportunity is an accepted principle in Australia and women fill many key positions, especially in the social services sector. It is quite likely that bicultural workers will work for a female boss and report to a female manager.
Promotions in the Australian workplace are usually based on merit and seniority rather than on other factors. Anyone who feels that they are being passed over has the right to ask questions about whether there were particular reasons they did not get the job and whether there are things they can do to increase their chances in the future.

Being a good team member is an important skill sought by Australian employers. This is why it is valuable to take time to get to know your work mates and participate when they get together during breaks or after work.

Workers in lower level positions (e.g. cleaners, filing clerks, delivery people) are usually treated with respect and as equals by those above them.

### iii. Work Structure and Protocols

Under Australian industrial law, permanent employees enjoy benefits such as superannuation with employer contributions, sick leave entitlements, paid maternity leave, paternity leave and, in some situations, study leave. The entitlements of casual workers differ and need to be discussed with the employer.

Before accepting employment, it is a good idea to ask to see a copy of the agency’s Personnel or Human Relations Policy. This should set out the entitlements of permanent and casual workers. If the agency does not have a Personnel Policy, it is important to find out whether employment conditions are in accordance with the relevant Industrial Award. There are grounds to be worried if the agency does not have a Policy and says the employment is not linked to an Award.

Union membership is well established in Australia and accepted as a right (though is not compulsory). Union members who have a grievance with their employer can ask their union for assistance to resolve the matter.

Australians generally prefer to maintain a 'work-life balance', believing in the principal of 'working to live' rather than 'living to work'.

### iv. Diversity

The Australian workplace is increasingly diverse, particularly in metropolitan Australia. In most workplaces, you can expect a multicultural mix as more than 40% of Australians were born overseas or have a parent who was born overseas.

Other forms of diversity include: single and married women and men, sole parents, people with disabilities, those of various sexual preferences, various age groups, and those who work flexible hours.

As previously mentioned, it is required that everyone in the workplace is treated with respect, irrespective of their gender, age, ethnicity, religion or position within the organisation. There are laws to prevent discrimination and harassment in the workplace and these will be examined in Topic 3. These laws prevent anyone discriminating against you – and they also make it unlawful for you to discriminate against others.

### v. Attire

Depending on the nature of work undertaken, there might be certain dress standards in the workplace. It is important to ask whether this is the case and to comply with
any instructions given. More often than not, dress requirements are imposed to keep you safe or to protect those with/for whom you are working.

If you are told there are no dress standards, it is important to look at your peers in the workplace and see what they are wearing. As a rule of thumb:

- you should look neat and tidy;
- your clothes should be modest;
- your clothes should be freshly washed and not stained;
- you should take particular care with personal hygiene as this is considered very important. Australians do not like strong body odours and daily use of a deodorant is an unspoken expectation.

In Australia you are permitted to dress in accordance with your religious beliefs unless there are sound reasons why this will prevent you from doing your job (e.g. safety concerns).

**vi. Punctuality**

This might be at the end of this list but it is actually very important. Australians might like to think of themselves as pretty relaxed but in reality they operate within a very structured environment. Most are woken by an alarm clock and then go on to spend the day having to do things and be places according to a set schedule. Even those who resent the regimentation tend to accept that it is part of life and it is considered rude and disrespectful to be very late.

Many people from refugee and migrant backgrounds find this ‘obsession with time’ quite confusing. It is different to their own ways and they cannot understand why time is given so much importance in Australia. But the reality is that it is important and there are three aspects of punctuality that you have to master. To work effectively in the Australian workplace you need to:

- accept that being on time really does matter;
- learn to organise yourself so that you can be on time;
- know how to take appropriate action (e.g. informing your manager) when you know you are going to be late for an important engagement.

**vi. Workplace Regulation**

In addition to the aforementioned laws that relate to employment conditions and behaviour in the workplace, there are many other laws that govern work in Australia. These laws will be explored in Topic 3.

**References:**

*Workplace Culture*. Victoria University.
Principles of Good Practice. Institute of Public Administration Australia.  
http://qld.ipaa.org.au/content/docs/iQ_Resources/iQ_Research/POGP/Values_and_Ethics_FULL_version.pdf


Activities

1. Make a list of the things you would most like to learn from this course:

During the course you might like to come back to this list and tick things off. If there are things on your list that you think might not be covered, tell your teacher about these. It is important that your teacher knows about the things you want to learn.

2. Make a list of the things you find most strange about the Australian workplace.

You might wish to return to this list as well during the course and think about whether you still think the same way of whether you now understand why things are like this.

3. In this session your teacher spoke to you about the things you must do if you are going to pass this course, including:

   • being on time for class;
   • participating in class;
   • allocating enough time to complete assessment tasks; and
   • submitting assignments on time.

Think about whether any of these might be hard for you. Make a list of the things that you need to do to make it possible for you to do them.
Topic 2: The Role of Government

In Topic 2 you will learn about:

- what is meant by ‘government’ in Australia;
- the areas of responsibility of the three tiers of government;
- government involvement in the delivery of services to forced migrants;
- the role of community sector peak agencies.

What Do We Mean by ‘Government’?

In the Australian context the term ‘government’ can be a little confusing because there are three distinct levels rather than one central government. These are:

- commonwealth,
- state/territory,
- local.

The people who make up these governments are elected by the citizens who live in the area covered by that level of government and they are accountable to them. In addition to the elected representatives, there are bureaucrats (people employed by the government) who work for the agencies responsible for undertaking government business.

Each level of government has particular things for which they are responsible. It is important to get to know who does what so that if you need something done or need help, you know who to ask.

All three levels of government are involved in different ways in the delivery of services to migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants and this session will explore this ... but first the big picture.

Federation

The Commonwealth of Australia was formed in 1901 when six independent British colonies agreed to join together to become states of a new nation. The rules of government for this new nation were enshrined in the Australian Constitution, which defined how the Commonwealth Government was to operate and what issues it could pass laws on.

The birth of Australia is often referred to as ‘Federation’. Under a federal system, powers are divided between a central government and individual states. Australia is like other federations such as the United States, Canada, Germany, India and Malaysia, all of which have three levels of governance at local, state and federal levels. In Australia, power is divided between the Commonwealth Government, the six state governments and two territory governments.\(^5\)

Distribution of Responsibility

As previously mentioned, the Australian Constitution sets out the powers and responsibilities of the Commonwealth and state governments:

- **Commonwealth Government powers** are derived from section 51 of the Constitution and include: defence, foreign affairs, trade and immigration.

- **State Government powers** include almost everything that the states did not give to the Commonwealth when the federation was formed in 1901, including: health, public education, roads and transport, agriculture and forests.

The powers of the third tier of government, **Local Government**, are defined by Acts of Parliament in each state and include local roads, parks and playgrounds, rubbish collection, library services, sporting fields, street signage and domestic animal regulation. Local governments are also responsible for a number of community services.

Some things are shared between the three levels, such as roads, environmental management and public health issues.⁶

Separation of Powers

Not only did the Constitution define which powers were to be give to the Commonwealth and states, it also set up a framework of government designed to protect the Australian people from abuse of power. Based on the principle of ‘separation of powers’, this framework is widely used in modern democracies and effectively means that at the national level, powers are divided between the three arms of government: the **Legislature** (the Parliament), the **Executive** (the Ministry) and the **Judiciary** (the Courts) - see diagram below.⁷ The separation, however, is not absolute (as it is in the United States) because in Australia the Executive is drawn from the Legislature (i.e. the Ministers are also elected Members of Parliament or Senators).

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The principle of the rule of law which underpins the Australian political system depends on the idea that whilst the parliament is supreme in making the laws, the courts, ultimately the High Court, has the responsibility for interpreting that legislation and assessing whether it is within the guidelines established by the Constitution.

Explaining the relative roles of the Parliament and the Courts, then Chief Justice of the High Court, Murray Gleeson, said in 2000:

*Under our Constitution, the responsibility of ruling upon the validity of laws enacted by democratically elected parliaments is cast upon a group of unelected lawyers. The fact that they are unelected means that they have no need to seek popularity, and should be uninfluenced by public or political opinion. The fact that they are lawyers reflects two considerations. The first is that the Constitution is itself a basic law .... The second is that the members of the High Court are expected to approach their task by the application of ... ‘a strict and complete legalism’.*

The Australian Parliament

The Parliament is at the very heart of the Australian national government. The Parliament consists of the Queen (represented by the Governor-General) and two Houses (the Senate and the House of Representatives). These three elements make Australia a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy.

There are five important functions of parliament:

- to provide for the formation of a government;
- to legislate;
- to provide the funds needed for government;
- to provide a forum for popular representation; and
- to scrutinise the actions of government.

Proposed laws (known as Bills) have to be passed by both Houses and gain the assent of the Governor General before they can become Acts of Parliament.

One of Parliament’s main tasks is to debate issues of national importance and create new laws or bills to solve specific problems in the Australian community.
Commonwealth Government Departments

Commonwealth Government departments implement the ideas and decisions of the Executive (Ministry) in a particular area of governance. Each department is led by a Minister in charge, and the main work of the department is determined by legislation.

There are 18 Commonwealth Government departments covering a wide range of areas from Agriculture to Veterans Affairs. The departments with greatest relevance to anyone engaging in bicultural work are as follows:

- Department of Home Affairs: www.homeaffairs.gov.au
- Department of Human Services: www.humanservices.gov.au
- Department of Social Services: www.dss.gov.au
- Department of Education and Training: www.education.gov.au
- Department of Jobs and Small Business: www.jobs.gov.au
- Department of Health: www.health.gov.au

Commonwealth-Funded Settlement Programs

In addition to their direct service delivery roles, Commonwealth Government departments also fund a wide range of services.

There is a long-standing tradition of governments funding the community and private sector agencies to deliver programs on their behalf. This partnership is seen as mutually beneficial, with the government being able to draw on the expertise of other sectors and these agencies having access to the funds required to deliver services to their clients.

While each funding agency has its own way of operating, it is fair to say that there are certain common characteristics of the funding arrangements:

- priorities and the underlying policy are set by the funding body;
- funding is typically allocated through a grants or tender process;
- the method of delivery is usually determined by the funded agency as specified in their funding application or tender;
- funded agencies are bound by service delivery principles determined by the funding body;
- funding is typically for a finite period (from one to five years), though there are some shorter term project grants;
- there is a high degree of accountability associated with government funding, with careful scrutiny of the quality of service delivery and the expenditure of public funds;
- government departments have to be able to justify their decisions with respect to allocation of funds and they check carefully to ensure there is no fraud or favouritism.

The following table outlines some of the key programs through which services for refugees and humanitarian entrants are funded. It is by no means all inclusive. It is also important to note that people from forced migration backgrounds who enter under family and skilled migration programs are not eligible for many of the DSS-funded services and might have to pay for some of the other services. It is necessary to check with each agency.
Some Key Programs Funded by Other Government Agencies

Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP)
Specialised Intensive Services (SIS) – part of HSP
Settlement Services Program (SSP)
Family Support Program

For further information see [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au)

State and Territory Governments

As previously mentioned, at the time of Federation, the states were keen to keep control over a number of key policy and service delivery areas, including health, education and housing. As most people are aware, however, the wisdom of this position has been hotly debated ever since with many arguing that giving these services to the states has resulted in too much duplication and too little coordination and gradually, as has been seen in the health sector, things are changing.

This being said, the 6 state and 2 territory governments continue to play an important role in the delivery of services in a number of areas relevant to migrants and refugees, including but not limited to:

- multicultural affairs
- health (including refugee health and torture and trauma counselling)
- school education
- housing
- aged care
- sport and recreation.

State governments also provide the framework that enables community-based organisations to become legally recognised entities (by becoming an ‘incorporated association’) and thus become eligible to apply for funds, take out insurance, rent property, employ staff, fundraise and do all of the other things community-based agencies wish to do.

Further, like Commonwealth government departments, many state government departments have grants programs that fund community-based agencies to deliver programs.

Each state and territory operates in a slightly different way so it is difficult to generalise beyond that outlined above. You really need to look at the websites of the government agencies in your own state/territory for specifics. A good place to start is...
with the multicultural policy framework that underpins state government services to migrants and refugees. This can be found on the following websites:

- www.multicultural.vic.gov.au
- www.multicultural.nsw.gov.au
- www.multicultural.qld.gov.au
- www.multicultural.sa.gov.au
- www.multicultural.sa.gov.au
- www.equalopportunity.wa.gov.au
- www.dpac.tas.gov.au
- www.dhcs.act.gov.au

Beyond this, you will need to look at specific areas of service delivery. For example, for Refugee Health you can go to:

- NT: www.gpnnt.org.au
- Qld: Mater Online: www.materonline.org.au/services/refugee-services
- SA: Migrant Health Service: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au
- TAS: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au

**Local Government**

The six States contain more than 650 local government areas. They are controlled by elected councils and are regulated by state Acts of Parliament. The roles and responsibilities of local government differ from state to state but as a rule of thumb, some of the services for which local councils are responsible include:

- **infrastructure and property services**, including local roads, bridges, footpaths, drainage, waste collection and management;
- **recreation facilities** such as parks, sports fields and stadiums, golf courses, swimming pools, sport centres, halls, camping grounds and caravan parks;
- **health services** such as water and food inspection, immunisation services, toilet facilities, noise control and meat inspection and animal control;
- **community services** such as child care, aged care and accommodation, community care and welfare services;
- **building services**, including inspections, licensing, certification and enforcement;
- **planning and development approval**;
- **administration of facilities** such as airports, marinas, cemeteries, parking facilities and street parking;
- **cultural facilities and services** such as libraries, art galleries and museums;
- **water and sewerage** services in some states;
- **other services** such as abattoirs, sale-yards and group purchasing schemes.

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8 Google the area of interest (eg 'education') plus your state (eg 'vic') plus 'gov.au' to find the relevant state government website.
Many local councils are very active in supporting groups within their area through small grant programs or in-kind support. Information about these programs can usually be found on their websites and/or you can contact the council’s Community Liaison Officer.

**Community Sector Peak Agencies**

In Australia it is recognised that the community sector has a vital role to play not only in the delivery of services but also in providing advice to government about policy. There is also an acceptance (admittedly more so at some times than others) that it is acceptable for the community sector to be critical of government policy, though there is an expectation that this be done in a constructive manner and through correct channels.

Much of the policy analysis work undertaken in the community sector is done by peak agencies. These are agencies set up by and accountable to the operational agencies and whose role it is to represent the views of their constituency.

Relevant peak agencies include:

- the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA): [www.fecca.org.au](http://www.fecca.org.au)
- Forum of Services for the Treatment of Torture and Trauma (FASTT): [www.fastt.org.au](http://www.fastt.org.au)

**Resources**


**Activity**

Work by yourself or with one or more of your classmates to complete the following table which shows which government agencies are responsible for the delivery of services in these areas and includes a brief description of the services they fund or deliver.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency(ies) Responsible</th>
<th>Description of Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal health</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Refugee health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torture and trauma counselling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law enforcement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child welfare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal advice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and material support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency relief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault/DV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Topic 3: Laws Governing the Australian Workplace

In Topic 3 you will learn about why the Australian workplace is controlled by many laws and about the laws that you must follow and which protect you when you are a worker in Australia, in particular that laws that relate to:

- Work Health and Safety;
- privacy;
- discrimination;
- gender equality and sexual harassment; and
- child protection.

Fair Work

Australia’s workplace relations system changed on 1 July 2009 and came into full effect from 1 January 2010, with a new national system for employees and employers across Australia. This system, called Fair Work, is designed to balance the needs of employees and employers to help make their workplaces happier, fairer and more productive.9

The Fair Work Act aims to promote fair, cooperative and productive workplaces in which employees are treated fairly and with respect. This encompasses:

- awards that apply nationally for specific industries and occupations, including a national minimum wage order;
- high levels of Work Health and Safety;
- National Employment Standards that ensure fair conditions and productivity;
- respect for other workplace rights;
- availability of training and apprenticeship opportunities;
- protection from unfair dismissal.

This model applies equally to everyone performing work for the Commonwealth - whether as employees of a Commonwealth agency, or as employees of a contractor to the Commonwealth (as many settlement services are).

It is also important that settlement workers are aware of Fair Work provisions so they can talk to their clients about it when this is relevant.

When problems arise, there is a **Fair Work Ombudsman**. It is the role of the staff of the Ombudsman’s office to work with employees, employers, contractors and the community to promote harmonious, productive and cooperative workplaces. The Ombudsman’s office also investigates workplace complaints and enforces compliance with Australia’s workplace laws.


**Work Health and Safety**

Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws are intended to protect the health and safety of everyone in the workplace, irrespective of whether they are an employee, contractor, volunteer or client/customer. The underlying principle of WHS is that employers have a **duty of care** to provide a safe system of work and employees have a **duty of care** to follow whatever directions they are given by the employer with respect to ensuring their own safety and that of those with whom they work.

The term **duty of care** in the WHS context refers to the requirement that a person/organisation actively look for anything that might harm or risk someone’s health or safety and take every reasonable precaution to remove the risk. Failure to do this can have legal consequences as will be discussed below.

There is a multi-layered framework that governs WHS policy in Australia derived from laws in three jurisdictions:

- **International**: International Labour Organisation (ILO) and World Health Organisation (WHO)
- **National**: Safe Work Australia
- **State**: state bodies eg Workcover NSW.

The legal framework is further divided up into:
The purpose of mentioning all of this is to emphasise the fact that WHS is something that is taken very seriously in the workplace.

Fundamental to ensuring that every workplace is safe is the fact that every employee (i.e. you) has a legal responsibility to:

- do everything their employer asks them to do that relates to health and safety in the workplace;
- carry out their work in a manner that will not risk the health and safety of others, for example:
  - to not engage in bullying, skylarking (doing silly things) or any other behaviour that puts a fellow employee at risk;
  - to not misuse or interfere with safety equipment;
- identify any workplace risks;
- take all possible steps to remove the risk and/or report it to appropriate authorities.

Employers also have responsibilities under law and if an employer fails in its duty of care to its employees/clients and someone is hurt or becomes ill, legal action can be taken against the employer. If an employee fails in his/her duty of care to colleagues or clients, this can be grounds for dismissal or, in extreme cases, legal action.

Every workplace is required by law to have a Work Health and Safety Policy and to ensure that:

- staff receive training in WHS;
- regular safety audits are undertaken.

It is important that when you begin at a new workplace you ask to see all policies and ensure that you are familiar with the particular provisions of the agency’s WHS policy.

**Workers Compensation**

Workers compensation provides protection to workers and their employers in the event of a work related injury or disease. Through the workers compensation system, injured workers may be entitled to:

- weekly payments for a specified amount of time,
- lump sums for permanent impairment (and pain and suffering where applicable),
- payment of medical bills,
- provision of legal assistance to pursue a claim,
- intensive rehabilitation assistance.

When a worker is injured at work, the employer, injured worker, insurer and treatment provider have responsibilities to ensure that the injured worker is provided with benefits and assistance to recover and return to safe, durable work.
Employers are required by law to take out Workers Compensation Insurance. In addition, each state and territory has its own Workcover Authority or Corporation. Use Google to find the relevant agency for you.

**Privacy**

Privacy is an important principle for bicultural workers, as it is for all workers. You learn a lot about other people’s lives but are bound by obligations not to talk about your clients to anyone other than those who have a legitimate right to know.

The agency for which you work is obliged by law to have a Privacy Policy and it is important that you make sure you understand everything in this policy and that you do everything it says you must do. The policy should provide guidance about:

- the type of personal information the agency needs to collect;
- how this information is recorded;
- where this information is stored;
- safety provisions for the storage of information;
- who has the right to access that information;
- to whom personal information can be divulged;
- a person’s right to access their information;
- how someone can complain if they believe there has been a breach of privacy.\(^\text{10}\)

According to Australian law (the Privacy Act), personal information is defined as:

> `'... information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database), whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.'\(^\text{11}\)`


Before leaving this topic there is important to note that while Privacy Laws are primarily directed at protecting the privacy of clients/patients, you also have an ethical obligation to respect the privacy of your colleagues and to be extremely careful about what you say about them … both inside and outside the workplace.

**Equal Employment Opportunity**

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is the principle by which all employees are given equal access to training, promotion, appointment or any other employment related

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\(^{10}\) If a client believes that their privacy has been breached, they have a right to take legal action against the worker and the organisation.

issue without regard to any factor not related to their competency and ability to perform their duties. In other words, EEO is about ensuring that:

- the talents of staff are recognised and used appropriately;
- people are employed and promoted on the basis of merit, not because of any connections they might have or any inducement they might give;
- employees are not disadvantaged in any way because of their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or any other defining characteristic unrelated to the work they are doing.

Throughout Australia, EEO is seen as a core principle within the workplace. Most agencies will have an EEO policy and national and state bodies have been established to provide education about EEO and assist in cases where EEO principles have not been followed. EEO sits side by side with Discrimination, Gender Equality and Sexual Harassment Legislation (see below).

Discrimination

Over the past 30 years the Commonwealth Government and the state and territory governments have introduced anti-discrimination laws to help protect people from discrimination and harassment.

The following laws operate at a federal level and are administered by the Australian Human Rights Commission:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975

The more recently introduced Fair Work Act 2009 brings much of this together under a single and simpler framework. Under the Act, it is unlawful for an employer to take adverse action against a person who is an employee, former employee or prospective employee because of the person’s:

12 The Australian Human Rights Commission is the national agency with responsibility for EEO. Use Google to find the relevant agency in your state.

13 www.humanrights.gov.au
race
gender
age
marital status
political opinion
social origin
pregnancy
colour
sexual preference
physical or mental disability
family or carer's responsibilities
religion
national extraction

The following are examples of adverse action when taken because of any of the attributes listed above:\(^{14}\)

- dismissing an employee,
- damaging an employee’s ability to do their job,
- changing an employee’s job to their disadvantage,
- treating one employee differently from other employees,
- refusing to employ a potential employee,
- not offering a potential employee all the terms and conditions normally in a job.

If a person believes they are being discriminated against in the workplace, they can lodge a complaint with the Fair Work Ombudsman (see [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)).

It is important to note that it is illegal for an employer to take action against an employee or threaten to take action if the employee lodges a complaint.

**Gender Equality and Sexual Harassment**

It is also important that you understand that Australia has laws relating to gender equality and sexual harassment.

Australia is a signatory to the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](https://www.cedaw.org) (CEDAW) and has a national [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](https://www.legislation.gov.au). Underpinning these is the belief that men and women are equal and should enjoy equality in all aspects of life. Further, they set out the rights of women to vote and stand for election, to have equal access to education, to be protected from discrimination in the workplace and to enjoy equality before the law.

Issues of particular relevance for you include the following:

- It is possible that you will have a female boss. You must treat this person with respect.
- Every worker must treat all female colleagues with respect and refrain from making any comments that could be construed as derogatory or of a sexual nature.
- Female workers have the right to be treated with respect and on an equal footing with males at the same level. They also have a right to be protected from discrimination and sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment can include:

\(^{14}\) From [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)
• staring, leering or unwelcome touching,
• suggestive comments or jokes,
• sending sexually explicit emails or text messages,
• repeated unwanted requests to go out on dates,
• intrusive questions about a person’s private life,
• requests for sex,
• displaying posters, magazines or screen savers of a sexual nature.¹⁵

In Australia there are also laws¹⁶ that protect people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex (GLBTI people). You might come from a country where these people are not accepted but you must understand that in Australia it is not acceptable to make negative comments about a person’s gender identity or to say or do anything to them that might constitute harassment. Conversely if, for example, you are homosexual, it is important for you to know that you have rights if you are on the receiving end of comments, abuse or mistreatment, you can seek help.

Anyone who feels they have been the victim of any form of sexual discrimination or harassment can lodge a complaint with the Australian Human Rights Commission. For information about how to do this go to www.humanrights.gov.au.

Child Protection

In Australia, anyone under the age of 18 is by law considered a child and there are special laws to protect children from exploitation, abuse and neglect. Each state and territory government has its own legislation for child protection and has its own child protection services. Each of the Acts identifies the paramount importance of the principle of the ‘best interests of the child’ and there are policies that provide guidance as to how decisions in this regards are to be made.

There are three areas relating to child protection that are of particular relevance for bicultural workers:

• working with children checks;
• educating clients;
• mandatory reporting of abuse and/or neglect.

Working with Children Checks

It is mandatory (required by law) in Australia that any adult whose work involves them having contact with children undergo a Working with Children Check (WWCC) to establish that they do not pose any known risk to children. Being asked to undergo a WWCC does not mean that your employer thinks that you might pose a risk.

There are two types of screening programs in Australia. Some states have employer-driven systems (NSW and South Australia) that are related to the position you are applying for. In other places (Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and the

Northern Territory) you can get a certificate that covers you to work with children and which lasts for a set period of time. This means that workers do not have to go through a new check if they change jobs while their WWCC is valid. Neither Tasmania nor the ACT have a screening program, however, individual employers might require police checks at their discretion.


**Educating Clients**

Bicultural workers have an important role to play in educating their clients (and people within their community) about laws and accepted standards with regard to children. It is very important that newcomers to Australia are made aware of the fact that it is not acceptable (and in many cases illegal) to:

- slap, punch, shake, shove, hit or any other way harm a child;
- allow a child to remain in a situation in which they are in danger;
- leave young children at home alone;\(^{17}\)
- travel in a car with a child who is not in a properly fitted and age appropriate child restraint;
- smoke in the presence of a child;
- be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs while caring for a child/children;
- fail to ensure that children are adequately fed and clothed and that they and their clothes are clean;
- put the safety of children at risk by subjecting them to or allowing them to witness domestic and family violence;
- fail to comply with the legal age of marriage;
- subject children to sexual harassment.


**Mandatory Reporting**

Mandatory Reporting is the legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect and is considered to be an acknowledgement of the seriousness of child abuse. Mandatory reporting requirements reinforce the moral responsibility of community members to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect and are intended to overcome the reluctance of some professionals to become involved in suspected cases of child abuse by imposing a public duty to do so.

**Mandatory Reporting laws** define the types of situations that must be reported to child protection services. All states and territories have mandatory reporting requirements of some description, however, the people who must report and the types

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\(^{17}\) There is no law that sets the age at which it is acceptable to leave a child at home alone. It is widely accepted, however, that it never appropriate to leave infants and toddlers alone, even for brief periods. Doing this can lead to a parent being charged with neglect. As children get older, the question has to be asked: might the child(ren) be in danger if left alone? See [www.parentlink.act.gov.au/parenting_guides/specific_issues/home_alone](http://www.parentlink.act.gov.au/parenting_guides/specific_issues/home_alone) for more information.
of abuse they must report vary across Australian states and territories. These range from a limited number of specified persons in specified contexts (Western Australia, Queensland) through to every adult (Northern Territory).

The relevant Acts and Regulations the states and territories contain lists of particular occupations that are mandated to report. Some states list a limited number of occupations for example Queensland (doctors, departmental officers, and employees of licensed residential care services) and Victoria (police, doctors, nurses and teachers). Other places (Australian Capital Territory, South Australia, and Tasmania) have more extensive lists or use generic descriptions such as ‘professionals working with children’.

There are penalties for failing to make a report.

**Resources**


**Activities**

1. **Why do you think there are so many rules and laws that govern the Australian workplace?**

2. **How does this compare to the situation in the countries in which you lived before coming to Australia?**

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3. What do you think about these rules and laws?

4. Make a list of the responsibilities YOU have in relation to ensuring that your workplace is safe for you and your fellow employees.

5. Write a list of things you can say to a friend who is asking you to tell them personal details about one of your clients:

6. Where can you go if you feel you are being discriminated against in the workplace?

7. Go to the website of the agency responsible for child protection in your state or territory and find what it says about mandatory reporting. Write down the things that are relevant for you:

8. What are going to be the most important lessons you will need to share with people from within your own community about child protection laws in Australia?
In Topic 4 you will learn about relevant skills you will need in the workplace, in particular:

- key management processes in the workplace;
- communication;
- teamwork;
- planning and organising;
- problem solving; and
- the need to make effective use of technology.

Management Processes

You are quite right if you think there is a theme running through much of this material – things in Australia are much more prescribed than in many parts of the world. You have to come to terms with a wide variety of procedures that you might think are annoying, a waste of time, an interference, disrespectful, suggesting that you are not trusted .... But the reality is that they are a routine part of working life in Australia that you need to accept.

Timesheets

Almost every workplace will require both permanent and casual staff to complete and submit a time sheet. Most workers will, at some stage complain about having to do this but there are very good reasons why it is important to do it, not least because timesheets:

- are used by the people responsible for the payroll to determine how much you should be paid and to organise for you to be paid;
- are also used to determine your entitlements such as holidays and overtime;
- enable you to query any discrepancies in your pay or entitlements.

In addition:

- timesheets should be filled in EVERY WORKING DAY so they record the hours worked;
- it is essential that timesheets are accurate. Pretending that you have worked for longer periods than you actually did or on days that you did not work is a very serious matter and might be regarded by some employers as behaviour that justifies dismissal.
Increasingly agencies are replacing paper-based time sheets with forms that have to be filled in on-line or lodged by email. This adds another level of complexity if you have had little experience working on a computer. The key issues here are:

- just because you find it hard does not mean that you should not do it;
- if you are uncertain about what to do, you need to ask your manager;
- if you feel your computer skills should be better, take a course.

As in many things, it is important that you take responsibility for your actions in the workplace. Asking for help will not get you into trouble ... but not doing things that are an essential part of your job will. This is a key part of the Australian workplace culture.

**Forms**

Timesheets are not the only forms in the workplace. The things you need to know are:

- there are many forms used in every workplace;
- it is your responsibility to find out about which forms are used and when they should be used;
- completing the forms accurately is part of responsible workplace behaviour;
- if you are unsure about which form to use or how to fill it in, you need to ask.

**Meetings**

Like forms, meetings are commonplace in many workplaces. Sometimes they might seem a bit of a bother – taking you away from doing the ‘real work’ – but attendance is important and has many benefits, not least enabling you to find out what is happening and what other people are doing.

Some meetings at work are more formal than others. Sometimes it might just be like a few people sitting around having a chat. In other workplaces, meetings might be very formal, with the coordinator, a team leader or other senior staff member taking the role of chairperson to guide the discussion and another person keeping a record of the discussion (minutes).

If you are not familiar with workplace meetings, it is a good idea to listen carefully and watch how other people behave. Follow their example. If there are things you are not sure about, ask. As previously implied, asking will most likely be viewed as the new staff member taking initiative rather than a sign of your ignorance or unsuitability for your new role.
Training

Increasingly emphasis is being placed on ‘professional development’ – in other words, building the skills of people within the workplace. A good manager will work with the people in his/her team to identify training needs and opportunities.

The following are important things for you to know about training:

- When your manager suggests that you might like to participate in some training, you should not automatically think that s/he feels that you are incompetent or unable to do your job.

- If your manager is a bit worried that you lack skills in a particular area and says so, do not see this as being critical but rather her/his way of helping you to build your skills.

- It is a very good idea to accept offers of training. If you do not, your manager might think that you are not interested in or committed to your job.

- If you hear about a training course that you believe will assist you to do your job better, it is quite acceptable to bring this to the attention of your manager and to ask whether you might be supported to attend. This will be seen as you taking initiative. If you do do this, however, it is a very good idea to spell out clearly why the course will benefit you in your work and how doing the course will benefit your employer.

Communication

Good workplace communication is the key to a good workplace and it is important to understand how to be a good communicator and use good communication skills.

When talking about communication you should realise that communication is not just about what you say but how you say it and what your body is doing when you are saying it. For example, if you say ‘that was good work’ to someone but your arms are folded, you have a frown on your face and there is no warmth in your voice, they will not believe you.

Good communication is also about listening … really listening. You don’t just have to hear what the other person says but think carefully about it. This is called reflective listening.

In class you will learn a number of other aspects of good communication, including the importance of realising that:

- people within one cultural group communicate in different ways;
- there are differences in communication styles across cultural groups;
- there are certain things you should not share with others – remember what you have learnt about Privacy Laws and Codes of Ethics.
Teamwork

As mentioned in Topic 1, there is an expectation in the Australian workplace that people will see themselves as part of a team. In essence this means recognising that:

- the contribution you make in the workplace is just one part of something much bigger than you;
- the effectiveness of the agency is dependent upon everyone doing their job to the best of their ability;
- there are many tasks that can be done better when the work is shared. This requires working collaboratively with other people;
- working collaboratively requires the use of effective communication skills (as just discussed);
- teamwork also requires every member of the team to:
  - think of other people, not just themselves,
  - listen carefully to other people’s ideas and think carefully about them,
  - ensure that the best interests of the client (or the project) are at the centre of every decision made and action taken.

Planning and Organising

With all the focus that has already been given in this unit to punctuality, forms and regulations, it should come as little surprise that planning and organising are considered very important in the Australian workplace. In this area, it is expected that the worker will take the responsibility for being organised. These are some things that might help you:

- Because mobile phones are so important for bicultural workers, make sure that when you arrive home, you plug your phone into the charger.
- Check your mobile phone is on first thing in the morning.
- Check for phone messages on a regular basis.
- If you have a pre-paid phone plan, make sure you top up before running out of credit.
- Always carry a diary (paper or electronic).
- Make sure you record all appointments in your diary.
- Keep a note book or post-it notes next to your phone so you can record messages and phone numbers.
- Make sure you file documents and important papers in the right place rather than leaving them on your desk. Remember the importance of confidentiality.
Write a ‘to do’ list at the beginning of each day that lists all the things you need to do. Tick things off as you go (it makes you feel really good when you see all the ticks).

If your job requires that you make file notes, do it straight away. Don’t leave it until later.

If your manager asks you to do a task, always check when they want it done by. This enables you to prioritise the task (know how urgent it is) and to know what they expect of you.

If you are taking a client to a place that you have never been before, make sure you find out before you go all the information you need to get there, e.g. public transport routes, the time it will take to get there, exactly where the building you are going to is etc.

If you have to go somewhere for work, make sure you allow enough time for hold-ups such as traffic jams along the way. This is especially important if you are meeting new clients at the airport as there is nothing worse for them than arriving in a strange country and finding no one there to meet them.

If something happens that prevents you from getting somewhere on time (e.g. you have a flat tyre or are held up by an accident) or if you cannot do something that you promised to do, always tell someone – preferably early enough that something can be done. Don’t leave it until the last minute.

Make sure you get enough sleep so you are not always tired.

You are the only person who can do these things. If you don’t, you will not be seen to be a good worker.

Problem Solving

Noting that every problem is slightly different, the following is a practical way to approach most problems a settlement worker might confront:
**STEP 1: Analyse the problem.**

What exactly is the nature of the problem?  
Why is it a problem?

**STEP 2: Consider possible solutions.**

What might make things better?  
Are there any obstacles in your way?  
How might these be overcome?

**STEP 3: Muster resources.**

What do you need to help you solve the problem?  
Is there anyone who can help/advise you?

**STEP 4: Take action**

Implement the course of action that best fits the problem and/or for which you are best equipped.

**STEP 5: Review action.**

Is what you have done solving the problem?  
Does it need to be modified in any way?

Asking for help to solve a problem is not a sign of weakness. If you come up against something you are not sure about, you should ask for help. It is far better to do this than to do something that will make things worse for clients. There are various ways of asking for help in such circumstances, for example you could say:

- I am not sure what to do about …. Do you have any suggestions?  
- I was thinking about doing …. Do you think this a sensible thing or do you have any other ideas?

You should look at every occasion you need to ask for help as a learning opportunity. You should think about how the other person went about solving the problem and also take note of any resources (contact numbers etc) they offered. All of this can then be stored (in your head, in a notebook or in a file) for use the next time you encounter a similar problem.

**Effective Use of Technology**

The reality now is that there is an expectation that workers be competent in the use of a variety of forms of technology including but not limited to:

- computers (for word processing, emails, data entry, research and spreadsheets);  
- mobile phones (in particular for calling and sending text messages);  
- photocopiers;  
- scanners;  
- facsimile machines (faxes).
With respect to the use of technology in the workplace, there are some critical things to consider:

- If you are not familiar with the use of this equipment, it is necessary that you learn. You have to be honest with yourself and your employer about what you know and do not know and it is your responsibility to look for opportunities to improve your skills.

- Many workplaces expect staff (especially casual or contract staff) to have a computer at home so that they can send out information, book their services etc. It is therefore very important for you to find out what the expectations are and if this is the practice, make sure you check your emails. If there is a problem with your computer at home, you should make alternative arrangements (e.g. by checking your emails at the library or your friend’s house or advising your work that you do not have email access).

- Make sure you reply to emails promptly. It is also good practice to send a brief note saying you have received an email (e.g. from your manager, another worker or your client) that contains important information. This way the sender knows you have received it.

- If it is expected that you use a mobile phone for their job, you have to make sure it is turned on, charged and in credit during all of the times they are on duty or on call.

- Make sure you ask for help if you come across something you aren’t sure how to use or fix (e.g. a paper jam in a photocopier). Ignoring the problem or walking away from it will not solve things and could make others annoyed or angry.

**Resources**

Communication in the Workplace. DEST.  

*Introduction to Effective Communication.* Office for Volunteers, Government of South Australia. 2006  

**Activities**

1. Read the comments below about employability and culture.

   - From your own experience or from what you know about the different cultures represented, do you agree or disagree with these statements?
   - Has your own culture been represented accurately do you think?
   - If your culture has not been included, can you say something about employability for people from your country?
**Communication**
In **Thailand**, workers who have direct eye contact with a boss or superior may be seen as rude or challenging.
In **Japan**, it’s OK to close your eyes when listening to an instruction. This means you are really paying attention and are listening with all your concentration.
In **Ethiopia**, workers tend to listen to the boss, but do not often offer suggestions.
In **Japan**, employers will agree to a manager’s request even if they know that it can’t be carried out.
In **Rumania**, it’s OK to interrupt your boss and be interrupted, unless you have been told not to do this. However workers opinions are generally not respected.
In **Ghana**, workers must be confident and direct when talking to other workmates and the boss.
In **China**, modesty is very important. Self worth should be noticed by others, but not self-promoted (telling people why you are good at what you do).

**Teamwork**
In **China**, the workplace is very competitive, so workers may not want to co-operate with each other.
In **Iran**, group effort is more important than individual achievement.
In **Bangladesh**, managers and employees do not chat socially at work.
In **India**, managers can be quite bossy. The workplace is less democratic than in Australia.
In **Japan**, each team member has a specific role and the manager conducts the team, like a conductor leads an orchestra. There’s not much room for improvisation.
In **Iraq**, men at work tend to dominate women and younger people.

**Problem Solving**
In **Somalia**, workers will discuss problems directly with their colleagues.
In **Vietnam**, problems are often not confronted directly in the workplace.
In **China**, managers keep tight control of their workforce. Problems between co-workers are not confronted directly, but addressed through a manager.
Complaining to a supervisor about a co-worker who has done something wrong shows loyalty to superiors.
In **Indonesia**, if you need help with a problem, you go to your supervisor not your work colleague.
In **India**, avoiding conflict and ‘saving face’ may be more important than having clear communication about a problem.
In **Japan**, workers try to avoid problems and conflict, but may discuss a problem with a colleague if it is really troubling them.

**Self Management**
In **Sudan**, the oldest people in a family make all the decisions. Lack of punctuality may not be a problem, if the reason given shows your level of standing in the community. Being late because you have assisted someone may be acceptable.
In **Somalia**, the boss decides what is best for all employees.
In **Japan**, punctuality is very important.
In **India**, it is no problem for people to wait all day for an appointment or interview.

**Planning and Organising**
In **Ethiopia**, workers are expected to be patient and wait for promotion. They are discouraged from making long-term plans.
In Iraq, it’s important for employees to decide on their own goals, but to ask family members and respected community members for advice. Life experience and wisdom are greatly valued.

In Japan people look to their family for advice with their careers.

**Learning**

In Japan, workers believe they can learn anything.

In Sudan, your character, your relationships, your family’s reputation and your potential to fit into the workplace are more important than your ability to learn formally.

In Somalia, where you went to school and how you achieved is important, but not as important as life experience.

**Initiative**

In Indonesia, initiative is not encouraged especially if the boss is older than his workers or of a higher social class.

In Korea, taking initiative may be seen as disloyalty.

In India, workers only take initiative if they have been specifically asked to do so.

**Technology**

In India, IT skills are valued more highly than people skills.

In Malaysia, company loyalty is valued more than IT skills.

In China, most workplaces are not as computerised for the average worker as in Australia.

---

2. Imagine you are a worker in a community centre. Select two of the following case studies and pretend that these are problems your clients are asking you for help to solve.

Use your problem solving skills to work out what advice you would give to them.

**Case Study Number 1:**

Gregor works as a customer service officer in a large government agency. He has to be at work at 8.00am each day. He catches a local bus to get there. One bus gets him to work at approximately 7.38am and the later bus gets him there at 7.58am. Sometimes though, the later bus gets very crowded and runs behind time. Greg likes to catch the later bus so he can sleep in a bit more in the mornings. But he has been late because of this three times in the last fortnight. He’s ten minutes late again this morning. When his boss asks him about it, Gregor gets angry. He says, “It’s not my fault. It’s the stupid buses. They’re always running late!”
**Case Study Number 2:**
Ronda is an older worker in a customer service call centre for an electricity company. Every week Ronda filled in her pay claim form by hand and gave it to her supervisor. But the company has decided to save paper from now on. It has told staff that they must fill in their pay claims online and send them directly to Salaries via the intranet. Ronda hates having to learn new things on the computer and she worries about making mistakes. She also worries that she might not get paid if she does something wrong. So she asks a younger co-worker called Karlee to do her online pay claim for her each week. Today is pay claim day, but Karlee is sick and Ronda’s supervisor is out at meeting. Ronda doesn’t know what to do.

**Case Study Number 3:**
Mahmoud has recently begun an apprenticeship to become an auto electrician. He does his practical training in a large car service and repair workshop. There are nine other mechanics working there, some are fully trained and some are in a later stage of their apprenticeship. On Fridays when they knock off after work, the men usually go to the local pub for a couple of beers together. They have invited Mahmoud to come with them, but he always refuses. They do not know that Mahmoud is a Muslim, so he doesn’t drink alcohol and that Friday is the day he usually goes to pray at the mosque. They have stopped asking Mahmoud now and he often gets left out of their conversations. He doesn’t understand why they are not as friendly as when he started there. Maybe they were just acting friendly at first.

**Case Study Number 4:**
Halle is an office administration trainee from Turkey. She has been in Australia a year and has been learning English quickly because her husband was born in Australia. She is confident and outgoing. This morning the office manager asks her to make some photocopies for a training session that afternoon. The manager speaks quickly because he’s in a hurry.

"Halle, I’d like you to do 10 of the masters in this folder marked A and 30 of these ones in the folder marked B. I need them double-sided and stapled top left. Have you got that?"

"Um yeah, I think so..." says Halle, not wanting to look stupid.

“Good. And when you’ve finished, could you leave them on my desk and go and help Jane set up the meeting room.”

“OK.”

Halle was not 100% sure of what her instructions were, but she thinks she can guess what she missed. She makes the copies single sided because she does not understand the meaning of ‘double sided’, and instead of 30 copies of B, she makes 13. The office manager is angry when he sees the copies. They are not right and need doing again. He tells Halle she has wasted not only paper, but time as well.
3. Following is a table that shows some of the skills that are seen as important for people working in the community sector. Either working by yourself or with some of your class mates, see if you can add some more requirements to the column on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employability Skill</th>
<th>Community sector requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>• Speak clearly and directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Listen carefully to instructions and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete case plans and incident reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply teamwork in a range of situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work cooperatively with people of different ages, gender, race, religion or political persuasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contribute to the planning and execution of operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>• Adjust work methods in response to changing work conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participate in team solutions to assisting clients</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Planning and organising | Manage time and priorities to complete work  
| | Identify and obtain appropriate equipment and permits  
| | Identify potential hazards and prepare appropriate responses  |
| Self-management | Take responsibility for planning and organising own work priorities and completing assigned tasks  
| | Monitor own performance to ensure work is completed on time  |
| Technology | Use technology to monitor and report on work progress  
| | Use communications technology appropriate to the workplace  |
Topic 5: Operating within the Australian Workplace

In Topic 5 you will learn about:

- the concept of ‘organisational culture’ and why it is relevant to you as a worker;
- the purpose of workplans and how to create one;
- why and how you can develop a professional network;
- the importance of professional development.

Organisational Culture

Every organisation, whether it is a small community centre or a large multinational company, has its own ‘culture’. In simple terms this covers:

- the philosophy behind the organisation; and
- what it hopes to achieve, i.e. its ‘strategic plan’ or ‘goals and objectives’.

In this section we will explore how agencies define their culture and the importance of:

- learning about the organisation’s culture before you decide to work for it so that you can make sure that you share the same values;
- understanding how the agency expects its staff to reflect its culture in the work that they do, and making sure you do this yourself.

Organisational Philosophy

There are various ways that organisations state their philosophy. Sometimes they simply talk about their ‘philosophy’, though the current trend is for agencies to refer to their ‘vision’, ‘mission’ and ‘values’ – either separately or collectively. Much has been written about these concepts but for the purpose of this unit it is possibly sufficient to define them as follows:

- **Vision**: this spells out what the organisation ultimately wants to achieve e.g. alleviation of poverty, finding a cure for cancer etc and it is contained in the Vision Statement. A good vision statement:
  - is clear, compelling and believable;
  - is aligned with the organisation’s values and mission;
  - is memorable;
  - attracts commitment and energises people;
  - creates a meaning in workers’ lives;
  - establishes a standard of excellence;
  - bridges the present and the future.
• **Mission:** this spells out the fundamental purpose of an organisation, providing a brief description of why it exists and what it does to achieve its Vision. In many agencies this will be expressed in a *Mission Statement*. Mission statements should be:
  - concise: usually one sentence;
  - outcome oriented: describing the outcomes the agency is working to achieve;
  - inclusive.

• **Values:** this spells out the beliefs that underpin the work undertaken by the agency and there is an expectation that they are shared by those associated with the organisation. As with the others principles outlined above, some agencies will express their values in a published *Values Statement*.

Most organisations will display their vision, mission and values prominently, for example on their website, in their annual report and promotional material, and sometimes on posters or displays in the office. This is important to ensure that all those associated with the organisation have a clear understanding of what it is and what it stands for.

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**EXAMPLE**

**Vision, Mission and Values Statement for the Asylum Seekers Centre of NSW**

**VISION:** Asylum seekers are welcomed to Australia and afforded a dignified, meaningful and safe existence pending the fair, transparent and expeditious resolution of their claims.

**MISSION:** To provide a welcoming environment and practical support for community-based asylum seekers residing in NSW, while building community support and pursuing social justice outcomes for asylum seekers.

**VALUES:** Defence of human rights, pursuit of social justice, respect, empowerment, integrity and teamwork.

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**Strategic Plans**

Whereas the vision, mission and values statements are usually broad and, if not permanent, intended to define and guide the work of the agency for an extended period, an agency’s strategic plan is intended to be a focused statement of intent – i.e. something that clearly sets out:

- where the agency sees itself now (its *current situation*);
- what the agency wants to do (its *goal* or *aim*);
- how it plans to do this (its *strategy* or *path*).
Relevance?

At this point you might be wondering why you need to know about the issues discussed above. The philosophy of an organisation is in place before you commence and strategic planning is largely the domain of the board or management committee, supported by the director or chief executive officer. There are, however, three key reasons why it is vital that you understand these concepts:

- When you are thinking about applying for work, you need to think carefully about whether the values of that organisation are consistent with your own values and whether it is doing work you genuinely believe is important. If you work for an organisation you feel good about, there is more chance that you will be happy there and feel proud of the work you are doing.

- When you go for a job interview, your chances of success will be greatly enhanced if you can demonstrate that you know the organisation’s core values and can explain how these are consistent with your own.

- When you are employed, you need to keep the agency’s philosophy and the key elements of its strategic plan in your mind and reflect upon whether what you are doing is consistent with this. If you feel there are differences, you need to raise these with your manager or supervisor.

Another reason why understanding the basics of organisational philosophy and planning is important is that at some stage you might be involved in establishing and managing an organisation within your own community … or advising those who are. The principles outlined above are also relevant to this.

Workplans

Whereas strategic plans guide the work of an organisation (or a discrete section within a large organisation), workplans set out the tasks to be accomplished by a worker (or small group of workers engaged on the same task).

Whether you have to develop and/or work to a workplan will depend very much on the job you are employed to do. Some workers must do this because it is part of the terms of their funding. This is the case if you are employed to deliver projects funded by DSS’s Settlement Services Program. Other workers, such as interpreters and caseworkers, are not required to do this … though as will be discussed below, undertaking some informal, personal planning is a very good strategy in the workplace.

Formal workplans are defined by the employing agency and/or the funding body. They will thus look different and contain different things. Essentially however, workplans break the role into discrete objectives and then, for each objective, the workplan:

- outlines the strategies that will be employed to achieve the objective;
- sets out a time frame;
- defines the expected outcomes (thus enabling progress to be measured);
- lists the resources needed.

These are often set out in some form of table, for example:
It is easy to think of workplans as a chore – and writing them can sometimes be daunting – but once a workplan has been developed and approved, they make a worker’s life so much simpler. You are very clear what it is you are expected to do, when you are expected to do it by and how you will know whether you have done it well.

**Informal Workplans**

As previously mentioned, not everyone has a formal workplan to guide their work. If this applies to you, you can still use some of the same principles to help with organisation of your work … especially if you are facing a big or complicated task or doing something for the first time.

Big tasks can seem much easier if they are broken down into smaller parts and then you can think about:

- the order in which things should be done;
- how you are going to do each of these;
- what you need to do this (resources, help from other people …);
- how will you know you have succeeded.

For example, if you wanted to build a set of shelves, you could break the task down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take measurements</td>
<td>Tape measure, paper, pen</td>
<td>Dimensions of book case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw up plan</td>
<td>Paper, pens, instruction manual</td>
<td>Plan to work from and shopping list drawn up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit hardware store</td>
<td>Transport, money</td>
<td>Timber, nails and other requirements purchased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build shelves</td>
<td>Hammer, saw, tape measure</td>
<td>New set of shelves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
'To Do’ Lists

Workplans tend to be about ‘big picture’ planning but there are times you need a little help with the day to day stuff ... especially if you are busy and have lots of things that you have to remember to do. This is where ‘to do’ lists can really help. This is simply a list of things you want to do that day (or soon) ... and when you complete each task, you can put a big tick next to it ... and when you do this, you feel like you are making real progress.

Dealing with Obstacles

We have a saying called ‘Murphy’s Law’:

*If something can go wrong, it will go wrong!*

Things sometimes happen that get in the way of you being able to achieve your objectives in the way you intended. The challenge is to:

- recognise early enough that things are going wrong so you can fix them before they get so bad they can’t be fixed;
- be creative enough to think of doing what you want to do that does not run into the same difficulties;
- be flexible enough to be able to change course mid way through a task.

Obstacles can be big or small.

Some of the ‘smaller’ obstacles you might encounter are:

- encountering a major traffic jam on the way to the airport to pick up a group of new arrivals;
- having your computer crash when you are racing to finish a report;
- discovering that your clients speak a different language to that on their documents; ...

More significant obstacles to the achievement of workplan objectives are things such as:

- being told your program has to cut its budget by 40%;
- being told you have to take on extra duties;
- discovering that a program on which you were relying is terminating;
- having a client die; ...

Professional Networks

There is an old saying ‘it’s not what you know but who you know’ which is very relevant in any form of settlement work. Skilful settlement workers are people who might not know everything but they have a good idea of who to ask ... and when a challenging issue confronts them, they know exactly who to turn to for help.
Most new workers enter the profession without a network of contacts on whom to draw, so the challenge that lies ahead of them is to sort out who is who in the sector and who does what. The purpose of this part of the session is to:

- emphasise the importance of building a database of contacts in relevant parts of the sector;
- explain how to go about doing this;
- show you how to organise this information so it is readily accessible.

**Building Networks**

Building a professional network is something that takes time and requires work. It is something you begin when you first commence in a new role and really need to continue throughout your professional life ... as no matter how long you have worked in a job, you will always meet new and useful people.

There is no ‘one way’ to build a professional network but the following hints might prove useful:

- Whenever you meet a worker you don’t know, make sure you ask his/her name and ask them to explain their role. If possible, get their business card.

- Remember that it is not just a question of the number of contacts you have but the quality of these contacts. Rather than thinking of it as being like the number of ‘friends’ you have on a Facebook page, think of it as building up a group of real life friends you can count upon. You need to get to know the people you feel will be helpful to you in your work and put some effort into establishing a relationship that is based on trust and respect and which has the potential to be mutually beneficial.

- Ask your manager to give you a rundown on who the local service providers are and who does what within these agencies.

- If appropriate to your role, attend local interagency meetings (i.e. meetings that bring together service providers in the local area). Use these as an opportunity to meet new workers and build your network.

Use training as a way to expand your contacts. You will be meeting people in the same sector and with similar interests, so learn more about them and make sure you obtain their contact details. **HINT:** this course is an excellent place to start doing this.

**Organising Contacts**

Gathering a whole lot of useful information is not much use unless you can lay your hands on it easily when you need it. Some people are very organised and do not need any instruction in this ... but for people who are not, one or more of the following suggestions might be useful:

Whenever you meet a new person who might be useful to you in the future, make a point of recording their name and details in the ‘Contacts’ section of your email program. Don’t forget to include some information about what they do to jog your memory when you are searching for contacts at a later date.
If you have a personal organiser, you might wish to use this instead. It is wise, however, to have some form of back-up as personal organisers can be lost ... and with them all the contacts contained therein.

If you don’t like or don’t trust computer based solutions, you can:

- record details in a separate space in your diary; or
- keep records on cards which you keep in alphabetical order in a special box; or
- devote a separate notebook or address book to work related contacts.

There is no right or wrong way (though some people might try to tell you there is). The most important thing is for you to keep the contacts in the way that you feel most comfortable with and which is easiest for you to use ... and which you make a commitment to yourself to keep up to date ... because this is the most important thing of all. The better your list of contacts is, and the faster you can find the right contact, the better you will be able to do your job!

**Professional Development**

Once you find employment, it does not mean that you can stop learning ... in fact quite the opposite. Any capable worker in the settlement sector will tell you that they can never afford to stop learning, not least because things are changing all the time.

- New groups of entrants are arriving.
- New government policies are being released.
- New service providers are opening up.
- New programs are being initiated.
- New people come into the sector.

Also, you might not want to stay in the same position for ever and if you want to take on a more senior role, you will need to learn new skills.

As described in Topic 1, there is a strong emphasis on professional development in the Australian workplace. An employer suggesting that a worker should undertake training does not mean that the worker is incompetent or failing in any way. It is a simple recognition that learning is a lifelong process and it is a wise investment for an employer to ensure that workers are given every opportunity to build on their skills and knowledge.

So the best thing for you to do is to embrace every opportunity that comes your way and also be vigilant for courses that will be of particular benefit to you. As explained in Topic 1, if you can present a good case to your manager as to why a particular course will help you in your job, and the funds are available, there is every chance you will be supported to attend.
Training courses are not the only ways you can learn. You need to recognise that there are many other ways to learn knowledge and skills that will help you with your job. These include but are by no means limited to:

i. **Work-based Learning:**

- Receiving coaching/mentoring from others
- Engaging in discussions with colleagues
- Being peer reviewed
- Undertaking a secondment
- Looking for opportunities for job rotation
- Participating in in-service training
- Visiting other departments and reporting back
- Analysing significant events
- Filling in self-assessment questionnaires
- Engaging in project work or project management
- Reflecting deeply on your work performance.

ii. **Formal Learning** ... other than participating in courses:

- Attending conferences
- Going to seminars
- Conducting research
- Writing articles or papers.

iii. **Professional Activities:**

- Becoming involved in a professional body
- Attending interagency meetings
- Joining a special interest group
- Membership of other professional bodies or groups
- Teaching or mentoring others
- Maintaining or developing specialist skills

iv. **Self-directed Learning:**

- Reading journals/articles
- Reviewing books or articles
- Updating knowledge through the internet or TV
- Keeping a file of useful articles and information to refer to.

**References**

http://www.mckinnonsc.vic.edu.au/vceit/orgs/orggoals.htm#ogo

**Activities**

1. In the column on the left are the names of well known car makers on the right are a set of organisational goals ... but if you think closely about these, they do not match up. See if you can create a table that is a more accurate reflection of these car makers’ organisational goals.
2. In this session you heard about how important it is to match your values with those of the organisation for which you work. To do this you need to be clear about what your values are.

Which of your values do you feel it is important to see reflected in the values statement of your current/future employer?

3. Use the internet to find the mission statements of the following agencies:

Australian Red Cross: __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Foundation House: __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
4. Develop an informal workplan for one of the following tasks:

- Buying a new car.
- Taking a camping holiday.
- Arranging a birthday party.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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Topic 6: The Bicultural Worker in the Australian Workplace

In Topic 6 you will explore what it means to be a bicultural worker in the Australian workplace and you will learn about:

- your roles and responsibilities as a bicultural worker;
- the principles of cross cultural communication;
- what to do when you encounter a problem.

Being a Worker from a CALD Background

The term **culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)** is used to describe people who have a cultural heritage different from that of the majority of people from the dominant Anglo-Australian culture. It 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.

CALD replaces the previously used term, **non-English speaking background (NESB)**. It is felt that CALD is more inclusive, not least because there are many migrants and refugees who come from countries that have cultures very different to that of Australia but where English is the official language and/or is widely spoken.

**People who may identify as being from a CALD background include:**

- recently arrived migrants and refugees;
- migrants and refugees who have lived in Australia for some time;
- people whose parent/s or grandparents migrated to Australia. These people are more commonly referred to as second or third generation Australians.

Over six million migrants have come to Australia since the end of World War II. This mosaic of cultures has created a nation unique in its diverse composition.

**CALD Workers**

The diversity of the Australian population is such that most Australian workplaces would include people from CALD backgrounds and there are some forms of employment where there is a very high representation. The latter would include workers in hospitals and nursing homes, security guards etc. These people are working in these industries not because of their background but because the jobs are available. This is not what we are going to focus on here. Instead we are going to look at situations where workers from a CALD background are employed **because** of their background.

Most agencies providing services to migrants and refugees are very keen to employ people from the same linguistic and cultural background as their clients and there are many good reasons for this. This being said, it is important that if you are a worker...
employed because of your bicultural skills, you are aware of the many challenges bicultural workers face when they working in the settlement sector.

### Challenges for Bicultural Workers

#### i. Use of Language Skills

Bicultural workers must recognise that they are not interpreters (unless they have undergone training and are specifically engaged as such). It is therefore important that if you are working as a bicultural worker, you learn how to politely but firmly resist being asked to act in this role. Bicultural workers have a particular role to play ... most significantly as an advocate for their client. Asking you to act as an interpreter might, amongst other things, require you to undertake work outside your job description and might place you in a situation of potential conflict of interest.

The important things for you to remember are:

- it is OK for you to use your language skills when you are talking directly to your client;

- it is OK for you to help out for simple interpretation – such as organising an appointment for your client with another agency;

- it is NOT a good idea to agree to interpret when another worker (in your agency or elsewhere) wants to hold a detailed discussion with your client. In this case you should explain that this is not appropriate and encourage the other worker to contact a qualified and accredited interpreter, e.g. from the Translating and Interpreting Service. Sometimes, however, it might not be possible to do this (e.g. for clients from small and emerging communities) and you might need to interpret for your client(s);

- it is DEFINITELY NOT appropriate for a bicultural worker to interpret for a health (physical or mental) intervention or when technical issues such as legal matters are being discussed. Specific language skills are required in such situations and there can be serious consequences (for both the client and the worker) if mistakes are made in interpretation.

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**Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)**

**Phone 131 450**
ii. Gender

There are many instances where the gender of a worker is more important than any other factors. This is particularly the case:

- where a female client has been exposed to violence at the hands of men and feels uncomfortable relating to a man, especially a man from her own country;
- where a man feels ashamed to display any insecurities or lack of knowledge in front of a woman, or is culturally accustomed to believing that it is inappropriate for a man to take advice from a woman.

The important things for you to remember are:

- you should be sensitive to occasions where the gender of the worker is significant;
- you have an important role to play in helping your agency understand when such issues are relevant to a particular client;
- it is OK for you to tell your manager that it is not appropriate for you to work with a particular client and that it would be better if the client was allocated another worker (even if this worker is not someone from their own background);
- it will not always be possible to find another worker so it important that you think of ways to help the client overcome any misgivings they might have about interacting with you.

iii. Ethnicity, Tribal Affiliation and Religion

Just because you come from the same country as a client does not mean that you are automatically the ‘best’ worker for that client. In pretty much every country from which refugees come, people have been divided – sometimes for centuries – on the basis of ethnicity, tribal affiliation and/or religion.

It is especially important to give careful consideration to the ethnicity, tribal affiliation and/or religion of the entrant in the selection of a bicultural worker when working with newly arrived refugees and forced migrants who have not had time to get used to multicultural Australia and to feel safe within it. For example it would be more appropriate to have a worker from an entirely different background working with newly arrived refugees than it would be to match:

- an Afghan Pashtun worker with a Hazara entrant; or
- a Burman worker with a Karen entrant.

In this case too, there is no shame in you saying to your manager that it would be better to assign another worker ... as long as you explain the reasons why this would be better for the client.

iv. Racism

There is no universally accepted definition of racism, however the Australian Human Rights Commission\(^\text{20}\) defines it as follows:

Racism exists in many different forms. Generally, racism is a set of beliefs, often complex, that asserts the natural superiority of one group over another, and which is often used to justify differential treatment and social positions. This may occur at the individual level, but often occurs at a broader systemic or institutional level.

Racism is not an exclusively white construct. It exists within every culture ... it just manifests in different ways and is directed at different groups of people.

The important things for you to bear in mind are:

- some entrants will not feel comfortable working with you;
- this is not a reflection on you personally ... or on your competence as a worker;
- you have a responsibility to bring this ‘mismatch’ to the attention of your manager and discuss other options.

v. Class

Most bicultural workers come from educated backgrounds within their own countries. Entrants from rural backgrounds and/or who have had little education might feel uncomfortable in the presence of someone who they think is more privileged or better educated than themselves.

Role and Responsibilities in the Workplace

Each organisation has their own expectations of its workers and every role within that organisation will have a discrete set of responsibilities attached to it. Learning about this is an important part of every worker’s induction when they commence a new job.

This being said, there is value in examining the sorts of expectations a settlement agency has of its bicultural workers. Let’s look at the Code of Ethics of Brisbane’s Multicultural Development Agency (MDA).²¹

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**MDA Code of Ethics**

Have the knowledge and skills required to comply with the required standards of conduct and behaviour of their professional organisation.

Conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner when carrying out their duties, as a representative of their organisation, in particular ensuring the maintenance of professional relationships with clients, including children and young people.

Use appropriate language and refrain from inappropriate physical contact with other staff, volunteers and/or clients, including children and young people.

Acknowledge their position of influence and trust as a bicultural worker and do not exploit clients.

Ensure that personal relationships, both within and outside of the organisation, do not adversely affect their performance, or that of others, in the conduct of the organisation’s business.

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²¹ [http://www.mdainc.org.au/?page_id=42](http://www.mdainc.org.au/?page_id=42)
Maintain both client and organisational confidentiality when engaging with people outside of the organisation.

Respect the integrity of other network organisations and demonstrate this respect through behaviour.

Recognise their responsibility to contribute to the development of good practice and the continuous improvement of service delivery through the maintenance and improvement of their skills and knowledge in respect of their professional practice.

Declare all personal, professional or financial interests that may, or may be seen to, unduly influence the performance of their duties.

Declare any conflict of interest that arises in relation to their role in the conduct of the business of the organisation and abide by any decision of the Board in relation to the management of that conflict of interest.

Comply with all financial procedures that relate to the performance of their role and ensure that the resources of the organisation are used effectively and efficiently.

It is probable that when you begin working for an organisation, you will be asked to read and possibly even sign a Code of Ethics such as this.

**Cross Cultural Communication**

People make two big mistakes when it comes to cross cultural communication and bicultural workers:

i. They think bicultural workers know all about cross cultural communication because they come from another culture.

ii. They think bicultural workers don’t need to know about cross cultural communication because they are working with people from their own culture.

They are wrong on both counts.

The fact that you come from another background does not, in itself, mean that you have cross cultural communication skills. These skills have to be learnt and people from CALD backgrounds have to learn them in exactly the same way as people from an Anglo-Australian background. It is true that as someone from another background you might begin with a bit of an advantage – you can compare and contrast the way you are used to communicating with the way people in Australia communicate – but it does not mean that you know all there is to know about how to communicate with people from other cultures, and it does not necessarily mean that you have mastered communicating with those from the dominant Australian culture.

It is equally wrong to think that bicultural workers don’t need cross cultural communication skills. It is true that you are likely to spend much of your work time relating to people from your own background, but you will also have to interact with your manager and with other staff from within your workplace and other service providers. These people are likely to be from a diverse array of backgrounds and you will need to be able to engage proficiently and appropriately with all these people.
Cross cultural communication is thus as relevant for bicultural workers as it is for anyone working in the settlement sector.

Learning how to interact with people from another cultural background takes time and effort. It requires that you:

- **do your homework**: this involves learning as much as you can about the particular culture and asking someone from that culture about the ways people interact with each other;

- **are very observant**: rather than just expecting that people will interact and respond in a particular way, look carefully at what they do and reflect upon this;

- **are prepared to learn from mistakes**: it is important to apologise when you feel you have made a mistake or do not know what is the polite thing to do. If you are humble and do not come across as if you know everything, the people with whom you are interacting are likely to be very patient and will help you to understand more about their culture.

When you are beginning to learn about a culture that is unfamiliar to you, the sort of things you should try to learn about first include:

- **Verbal greetings**: how do you say ‘hello’, ‘welcome’ and ‘thank you’ in their language?

- **Non-verbal greetings**: what is the polite way to greet someone ... and are there gender issues to consider?

- **Gestures**: what is the polite way to beckon someone to come with you, sit down etc? And are there common gestures in your culture that are considered offensive in theirs?

- **Eye Contact**: is it considered polite or impolite to look someone in the eye when you are talking to them? And are there gender differences?

- **Protocol**: is it culturally appropriate for you to address questions and instructions to the male head of household?

- **Touch**: are there sensitivities about touching children or someone of the opposite sex?

- **Attire**: are there particular forms of dress that are seen as inappropriate?

- **Entering the home**: are there conventions you should follow such as taking shoes off, asking permission to enter etc?

- **Home visits**: are there conventions about being a guest in someone’s home eg accepting refreshment, commenting (or not) on the home etc?

**Conflict Resolution and Grievance Procedures**

As much as we would like to think that everyone in the workplace gets on wonderfully with each other and that you can be happy all the time, sadly this is not the case.
There will be times when things become tense and/or you will feel unhappy. The first thing to remember when this happens is that it is normal. It will happen to everyone at some stage. The next thing you need to know is that there are things you can do about it to make it better.

When you feel that things are not going as they should be at work, the best place to start is to think very carefully about what is happening. There is a possibility that whatever is happening has nothing to do with you. For example, if a colleague or your manager is angry or distant, it might not be because you have done something wrong. It might be because s/he:

- is not feeling well;
- has had a series of sleepless nights;
- has problems at home;
- is feeling overwhelmed by things at work; ...

If you jump to the assumption that you are the cause of the tension, you can sometimes make things worse.

If, after thinking about whether there might be other issues involved and do not know the answer, the next step is to ask a trusted colleague. The term ‘reality check’ is sometimes used to describe this process.

If, after consideration, you conclude or suspect that the problem you are facing might in fact have something to do with you, once again there are some things you can do... though it is a very wise idea to seek advice from your manager or an experienced colleague before you take any action.

How you handle the problem you are facing will depend on its nature:

- If you have a disagreement with or feel uncomfortable in the presence of a colleague, and you do not feel able to take this up with the person concerned, it is a good idea to talk this through with your manager.

- If the problem is with the manager, you might wish to talk to someone more senior in the organisation or a member of the management committee.

- If you have an argument with your client, it is very important that you write some notes about what happened immediately after the incident and inform your manager as soon as possible. You must then take advice from your manager about what should happen next.

Serious workplace problems are often referred to as ‘grievances’. NSW Industrial Relations defines a grievance as ‘...a formal expression of dissatisfaction about a work situation usually by an individual employee, but it may sometimes be initiated by a group of employees or a union acting on their behalf’. 22

Examples of grievances are:

- discrimination
- harassment
- bullying
- unreasonable work demands
- unsafe work practices.

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Your place of work should have a **Grievance Policy** in place. This sets out what you should do in the event of a grievance. Each agency’s policy will differ slightly but most include the following procedures for managing grievances:

- the employee notifies the employer (usually in writing) about the grievance;
- a meeting is set up at which the employee (and a support person if required) can outline the nature of the problem to their manager and state the remedy sought;
- the manager (or other senior person in the organisation) will speak to any other people involved. This is very important as they have the right to have their side of the story heard too;
- the manager will take the steps deemed necessary to resolve the situation.

If the problem is not resolved by this process, an employee has the right to ‘escalate’ the matter – i.e. take it to someone more senior within the organisation – or take the matter to an external complaints body such as the Anti Discrimination Board\(^\text{23}\) and/or the Australian Human Rights Commission.\(^\text{24}\)

**Resources**

*Managing Cross Cultural Conflict Productively.*


Research Unit for Multilingualism and Cross Cultural Communication. University of Melbourne. www.rumaccc.unimelb.edu.au

**Activities**

1. Translate the MDA Code of Ethics (or the Code of Ethics of the agency for which you are working) into your first language.

2. Ask any of your classmates who comes from a country you know very little about to help you understand how to interact politely from someone from that country. Write down what you learn about:

   **Verbal greetings:**

   **Non-verbal greetings:**

   **Gestures:**

   **Eye Contact:**

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\(^{23}\) Each state has its own Anti Discrimination Board. Check Google for the one relevant to you or go to your state government’s information site.

Protocol: ____________________________________________________________

Touch: ______________________________________________________________

Attire: ______________________________________________________________

Entering the home: ____________________________________________________

Home visits: __________________________________________________________

3. Select one of the following case studies and explain what advice you would give to the person concerned.

**Case Study 1:**
Sara works for Sunnybank Community Centre. Since Joe was employed she has been very unhappy at work. Every time she looks up, Joe is watching her. When they met in the tea room, Joe asks her lots of questions about her family and her personal life. He occasionally brings her cups of coffee. Sara does not like Joe and is worried that her husband would be very unhappy if he found out that a man had been talking to her at work.

**Case Study 2:**
Ali is a caseworker at the Brookside Centre. Ever since he was shown on television in a Gay Pride parade, some of his fellow workers have been making nasty remarks about him being 'queer' and 'a girl'. When ever he goes into the tea room, some of his colleagues get up and leave and he is no longer invited to go on work social outings. He asked his manager what to do and his manager just said 'grow up'.
**Topic 7: What it Means to be a Bicultural Worker**

In Topic 7 you will look at other aspects of being a bicultural worker, in particular at how things such as your ethnicity, class, gender, age and religion might be relevant for you in your work and how they might affect your relationship with clients.

**Understanding Ourselves**

Thus far we have focused on the environment in which you will be working and the needs of the people with whom you will work. In this session we will focus on ourselves and think about how a lot of things about ourselves we just take for granted are very relevant to the work we do. In class you will have an opportunity to construct an Identity Map that reflects how you see yourself and the things that are important to you.

You might like to record here some of the things you wrote down in class:

![Identity Map](image)

You also had an opportunity to learn a little about how other people see you.

**Why this is Relevant**

Sometimes you might hear someone saying 'I don’t care what other people think of me, I will be my own person'. There are many circumstances where such a statement is valid but not necessarily if you are a worker in the settlement sector because:

- the best interests of the clients should be at the centre of your thinking;
- your clients need to be able to feel comfortable with you;
- your clients need to be able to trust you;
- your clients have had experiences (often in the recent past) that affect the way they think about people from particular backgrounds and/or who present with certain characteristics.
It is also relevant for you to remember:

- the fact that you had nothing to do with the bad things that happened to your clients will not necessarily stop your clients being wary of you;
- there will be times when it is necessary for you to recognise that you are not the best person to work with a particular client or group of clients;
- if this happens, it has nothing to do with your ability as a worker – in fact, if you are able to recognise a potential or actual ‘mismatch’, you are showing that you have relevant skills for work in this sector.

When you are thinking about worker-client matching, there are certain characteristics you need to look out for:

- **ethnicity:** where the entrant has come from a conflict in which race or ethnicity is of particular relevance e.g. from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan or Burma and where the worker is from an ethnic group antagonistic to the entrant;

- **tribal affiliation:** whereas ethnicity is relevant in many situations, tribal affiliation tends to be a less common issue but it is very significant when it is relevant – for example with Somali entrants;

- **gender:** this is especially important for Women at Risk (visa subclass 204) entrants and for female headed households where a female worker is important. It is, however, equally relevant for some male entrants to be linked to a male worker, for example in situations where the man has come from a very traditional society (i.e. where a young female worker would find it very hard to gain their respect or trust) or where the man has been tortured or heavily traumatised (and would find it demeaning to disclose this to a woman – especially a young woman);

- **age:** as implied above, it can be hard for younger workers because in many cultures, wisdom is believed to come with age;

- **religion:** this is a variant on the ethnicity situation above – if the conflict from which an entrant has fled involves a group from one religion targeting a group from another religion, it is inappropriate to match a worker associated with the persecutor’s religion with a victim of this conflict. Careful consideration should also be given if entrants come from a minority religion within a country e.g. when you are considering Christians, Mandaeans or Baha’is from the Middle East;

- **class/socio economic status:** clients who come from less privileged backgrounds than workers might feel uncomfortable with or intimidated by them. It might also revive memories of past mistreatment and lead to renewed trauma.

- **professional identity:** workers have to be careful not to allow their sense of achievement about being employed to be translated into a sense of superiority over others. Another risk is allowing their excitement about being able to help others to lead to them doing everything for their clients or getting too involved.

When reflecting on these topics it is good to keep in mind the Humanitarian Settlement Program Principles. While they were written for a specific group of workers (those employed to deliver initial settlement services) they are equally relevant for anyone working with refugees.
HUMANITARIAN SETTLEMENT PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

Some of the key principles guiding the delivery of the HSP are as follows:

- Service Providers work collaboratively with community service providers and professionals to ensure the best possible settlement outcomes for each Client.
- Service Provider personnel are skilled to work appropriately with Clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and are respectful of the cultural and religious values of Clients.
- Service Providers deliver services innovatively to maximise Client outcomes and effective use of resources.
- Clients are active participants in the case management process. Outcome goals and activities are developed in collaboration with the Client and are tailored to each Client’s needs and personal circumstances.
- Clients are individuals who have the inherent right of respect for their human worth and dignity.
- Service delivery draws upon Client strengths, with the aim of assisting Clients to participate fully and independently in the Australian economy and society.
- Each Client has one case manager who is the central point of contact and assumes overall responsibility for identifying and addressing changing needs.
- Services focus on achieving sustainable Client outcomes by developing skills and competency, supporting realistic expectations and transitioning Clients to independence, other settlement services and/or mainstream service systems.

Workplace Supervision

One final important point: bicultural work is incredibly valuable but it can also be very hard. Nobody expects you to have all the answers in the beginning and the longer you spend in the job, the easier it will become. As you are learning, you need to talk through the challenges you face with your superiors and to take guidance from them. Workplace supervision (or ‘debriefing’ or what ever it is called in your workplace) is invaluable for you and you should embrace it as a constructive process – not fear it, thinking it might imply you are not doing your job well.

For the full set of Principles see the DSS website: www.dss.gov.au
Resource


Activities

1. You have been referred a client who is an 80 year old man from Iran who is in poor health. Amongst his many problems is prostate cancer. Are you the right caseworker to work with this man? Explain your answer:

If you are not the right worker, describe the characteristics of someone who would be:

2. You have been referred a client who is a 16 year old unaccompanied minor from the Democratic Republic of Congo. He is very good at sport but is very nervous about going to school. Are you the right caseworker to work with this young man? Explain your answer:

If you are not the right worker, describe the characteristics of someone who would be:

3. You have been referred a client who is a 30 year old single mother with 4 children from Burma. She is a Rohingya but she is afraid to make contact with members of the small Rohingya community in Australia. Are you the right caseworker to work with this woman? Explain your answer:
If you are not the right worker, describe the characteristics of someone who would be:

4. Translate the Humanitarian Settlement Services Principles into your first language.

Do any of these principles seem strange to you? If so, which ones? Make a note of these and ask your teacher to explain them to you.

5. Explain the ways in which supervision can help you in the workplace:
Topic 8: Understanding and Managing Boundaries

In Topic 8 you will:

- explore the concept of professional boundaries;
- consider why maintaining professional boundaries is so important for bicultural workers;
- learn skills that will help you to maintain boundaries.

Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries are the limits which protect the personal, emotional and physical space between colleagues and between a worker and client. Maintaining boundaries enables workers to focus on their job and to ensure that all their interactions are *fair, unbiased* and *equitable*. In Australia professional boundaries are taken seriously because they are seen as necessary to protect both workers and clients and ensure an efficiently functioning workplace.

Most workplaces will have some form of guidance for workers about boundaries, usually in the form of a Code of Ethics (such as that discussed in Topic 6) or a Personnel or Human Resources Policy or some other form of policy document.

While every such document is likely to be different, it is probable that most will make it plain that it is *not* appropriate for staff to:

- invite clients into their own home;
- discuss their personal life with clients in anything but a superficial way;
- go to a client’s home for reasons unrelated to their work;
- see clients for purely social reasons unrelated to their work;
- embark on a romantic or sexual relationship with a client.

Some organisations also have policies that make explicit comments about romantic or sexual relationships between staff.

It is very important for you to ask to see your employer’s policies and to pay particular attention to what is said about boundaries. If there isn’t a written policy that covers boundaries, you should make a point of asking your manager to explain the agency’s expectations of staff in this regard.

Managing Worker-Client Boundaries

The reality is that when you accept a position as a bicultural worker, you will have to accept that it will have a significant impact on your personal life and that this is an unfortunate but non-negotiable part of the job.
Being a bicultural worker means that, for as long as you are employed in this job, you are required to distance yourself from your community, ensuring that:

- you declare any form of conflict of interest, most particularly if you have any prior connection to or relationship with a client;
- any relationship you have with a client is strictly professional and does not stray into a friendship;
- you strictly limit any face to face social interactions with clients (e.g. at a community gathering) and avoid computer-based social networking involving clients;
- you do not do anything at work that could be construed as benefiting a family member or friend;
- you draw very strict lines around your professional life and your social life;
- except in the case of an emergency, you do not accept phone calls from clients at home or after hours;
- you refrain from engaging in community politics and/or the management of any community-based organisation (unless you have the express permission of your employer to do so).

One of the most challenging things for people who do the right thing and adhere to all the requirements listed above is managing the expectations of others (clients, community members and even family). Anyone who is employed will be seen as being in a position of power and others will expect him/her to do things for them ... and if this does not happen, are likely to attribute all sorts of incorrect motives to the refusal.

### Managing Worker-Worker Boundaries

Worker-client boundaries are not the only professional boundaries in the workplace. There are also boundaries associated with the relationships:

- between workers;
- between senior and junior workers.

Here too it is possible that a workplace will have a policy that gives some guidance about these issues and it is important to familiarise yourself with this. If there isn’t a written policy, ask your manager for some guidance.

It is probable that a (formal or informal) workplace policy will make reference to the importance of:

- being conscious of the fact that your workplace is a place of work and that the interactions between staff during work time have to be respectful, courteous and related to work;
- ensuring that chatting about non-work related issues is largely confined to break times and that if it occurs during work times, such conversations be kept brief;
- being friendly with your workmates but not necessarily talking about your most personal details;
- being aware that any friendships you might have with colleagues should be kept entirely separate to work;
• ensuring that if you are in a senior position, you treat any person with whom you have a private friendship in exactly the same way that you would treat any other member of staff and do not do anything that could be construed as favouritism;

• ensuring that if you have a personal friendship with someone in a position more senior than your own, you treat that person at work as you would treat any other supervisor and you do not ask for or expect any favours;

• being extremely cautious about making any form of advances to a colleague that could be seen as romantic or sexual in nature and ensure that you stop immediately if you sense that any feelings you might have for the other person are not reciprocated. Remember the discussion in Topic 3 about sexual harassment.

Most employers are not happy about workers becoming romantically involved with each other as this can lead to complications in the workplace, both for those in the relationship and their co-workers. Some workplaces go as far as saying that such relationships must not happen and requiring one or both parties to leave if a relationship commences.

This being said, workplace romances do sometimes form. If they do, there are 'conventions' (unwritten rules) that should be followed to minimise any chance of disruption in the workplace. These include:

• do not bring your relationship into the workplace. Ensure that all your interactions with your partner are strictly professional and that you respect your partner’s boundaries and position at work;

• do not favour your partner in any way or treat him/her any differently to other workers;

• if your relationship goes bad, be professional enough to keep your negative feelings about the other person to yourself and do not ask/expect any of your colleagues to take sides.

Resources

[www.mdainc.org.au/?page_id=42](http://www.mdainc.org.au/?page_id=42)

Activities

1. What do you think will be the hardest things for you in terms of managing boundaries?

2. What strategies have your learnt to help you to manage these challenges?

3. What answer would you give to your cousin when he comes to you at work and asks you to help him to get a bigger house for his family?

4. What would you say to one of your clients who wants you to come to his son’s birthday party?

5. What would you say to a young female colleague who told you that one of her clients who she really liked had asked her out on a date?
**Topic 9: Working with Traumatised Clients**

In **Topic 9** you will learn about how trauma affects your clients and how it can affect you. In particular you will learn about:

- how to recognise the signs of trauma in clients;
- what to do if your client shows signs of trauma;
- how to protect yourself from becoming traumatised by your work.

### Understanding Trauma

The refugee and forced migration experience is traumatic so when you are working with clients from these backgrounds, you are working with survivors of trauma and in many instances, torture.

Estimates suggest that state-sanctioned violence occurs in over 100 countries. In most instances this is directed towards people not because of what they have done but because of who they are (their ethnicity, religion etc) or where they live (somewhere rich in resources that others want). As a result, everyone is at risk—men, women, young people, children and infants. All are equally likely to have witnessed horrific events and suffered the effects of dislocation and deprivation. All will have experienced fear and loss ... and the fear and grief does not end with their arrival in Australia.

Trauma can affect a person in all areas of their life. The impact can disrupt or damage the relationships that they have established with partners, parents, children, family and friends. It can change the way they feel about themselves and others.

Traumatic events can be internalised as ongoing pain, anxiety or panic and be accompanied by unresolved grief and depression. Some survivors find it hard to trust other people. This can go on for long periods and in some cases, never be resolved.

In addition, a newly arrived forced migrant is faced with the daunting task of settling in a new country and dealing with the challenges of learning a new language, adapting to a new culture, arranging housing, employment and children’s schooling often without a support network of family and friends.

In many non-Western cultures psychological problems bear a lot of stigma, and sufferers risk being labelled ‘mad’. In such cases clients’ psychological stress is often somatised or expressed in the form of physical problems, such as headaches, backache and general body tension.

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26 The following section draws on material produced by ASETTS and STARTTS and available on their websites.
The effects of trauma are not always the same, even for those who have shared the same experiences. We are all individuals and therefore unique in many aspects. Our reactions and the processes we engage with towards healing are as unique as we are and are linked to the way we were brought up, the experiences we have had, our capacity to deal with stress, the emotional support we can get from those around us and many other factors.

**Signs of Trauma in Clients**

Not only does the impact of trauma differ from person to person, so too does the way a person shows their trauma. There is no ‘typical’ response to trauma. Some people hide their symptoms whereas in others they are obvious. Some relatively common responses even seem to be contradictory, e.g. one person might be highly agitated while another is withdrawn and apparently unemotional. It is thus important for workers to be aware that they are not looking for ‘a symptom’ but rather for any one or more of a range of behaviours that might point to the presence of unresolved trauma.

**Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** is the term frequently used to describe the condition that develops as a result of an extreme traumatic stressor or a series of traumatic events. There is a wide variety of symptoms that fall under the broad heading PTSD and amongst these, some patterns emerge. The following are examples of symptoms of PTSD that fall within these groupings. It is stressed that this should not be seen as an all-inclusive list.

### i. Re-experiencing the traumatic event:

- Intrusive, upsetting memories of the event
- Flashbacks (acting or feeling like the event is happening again)
- Nightmares (either of the event or of other frightening things)
- Feelings of intense distress when reminded of the trauma
- Intense physical reactions to reminders of the event (e.g. pounding heart, rapid breathing, nausea, muscle tension, sweating).

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27 Adapted from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Helpguide.org.
ii. **Avoidance and emotional numbing:**

- Avoiding activities, places, thoughts, or feelings that remind you of the trauma
- Inability to remember important aspects of the trauma
- Loss of interest in activities and life in general
- Feeling detached from others and emotionally numb
- Sense of a limited future (you don’t expect to live a normal life span, get married, have a career).

iii. **Increased arousal:**

- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Irritability or outbursts of anger
- Difficulty concentrating
- Hypervigilance (being on constant ‘red alert’)
- Feeling jumpy and easily startled.

iv. **Other common symptoms or behaviours:**

- Anger and irritability
- Guilt, shame or self-blame
- Substance abuse
- Depression and hopelessness
- Suicidal thoughts and feelings
- Feeling alienated and alone
- Feelings of mistrust and betrayal
- Headaches, stomach problems, chest pain.

It is important to note that some of these symptoms are fairly clear signs of trauma. Nightmares, flashbacks and hypervigilance are examples of these. There are also a number of symptoms that are far less obvious – and where it is easy to mistake or misdiagnose them. Some of the physiological responses to trauma – headaches, stomach problems, chest pain etc - fall into this category.

Children also suffer from PTSD. Common symptoms amongst children include:

- nightmares,
- regression to an earlier developmental stages e.g. bedwetting,
- atypical fear reactions e.g. when meeting new people,
- changes in behaviour at home or school, including being naughty or rebellious,
- changes in mood e.g. being uncharacteristically sad or withdrawn or conversely, being overactive and difficult to manage,
- displaying acts of aggression towards others,
- self harm and/or engaging in dangerous behaviour.

One of the things that can seem quite curious about the way trauma affects people is that in many (but not all) cases there can be a delay in the overt symptoms becoming apparent. Sometimes this delay can be months, sometimes years and sometimes decades. The fact that the overt symptoms are not initially apparent, however, does not mean that the person is not affected by trauma. Symptoms can be just below the surface or masked by other behaviour patterns.

When refugees and other forced migrants first come to Australia they are typically consumed by the challenges of adapting to their new life that they don’t have the time or emotional energy to devote to the past. For some it is when they begin to feel
‘settled’ that thoughts of the past begin to creep in. For others, the trigger can be another traumatic event such as the death of a family member, a car accident etc. When a person starts to experience symptoms of PTSD it can be quite frightening. They don’t necessarily associate these symptoms with trauma and can be concerned that they are linked to other things such as a serious physical illness or that they are going ‘mad’. It can also be very frightening for family members watching changes in their loved ones when there is no apparent explanation for these.

**Working with Trauma Survivors**

As discussed, when you are working with refugees and other forced migrants, it is reasonable to assume that your clients will have experienced significant trauma at some stage in their past. The extent of this trauma will vary, as will the way it presents.

There are some important lessons for people working with trauma survivors:

- past trauma will have an impact on your clients’ ability to learn new skills and assimilate information. This can also be a significant barrier to learning English;
- even clients who do not show any overt symptoms of trauma are likely to be affected by it in various ways;
- many of the things that your clients do that seem ‘strange’ to you could well be linked to their past experiences and be symptoms of PTSD;
- it is completely normal for people to be affected by trauma and to experience some form of PTSD. They are not mentally ill and they are not going mad;
- those affected by PTSD can be supported to ‘get better’;
- it takes specialist skills to help trauma survivors;
- the best thing workers who have not had this specialist training can do is to be vigilant for signs of trauma in their clients and when they are apparent:
  - assist their client to understand how important it is for them to get help;
  - refer their client to a specialist counselling service (see below).

**Services for Survivors of Trauma**

It is now widely recognised that it is highly beneficial for people who have experienced torture and other severely traumatic events to receive specialised support.

Every state and territory has its own specialist agency that provides support to survivors of torture and trauma:

ACT: Companion House: [www.companionhouse.org.au](http://www.companionhouse.org.au)
New South Wales: STARTTS: [www.startts.org](http://www.startts.org)
Northern Territory: Melaleuca Refugee Centre: [www.melaleuca.org.au](http://www.melaleuca.org.au)
South Australia: STTARS: [www.sttars.org.au](http://www.sttars.org.au)
Western Australia: ASETTS: [www.asetts.org.au](http://www.asetts.org.au)
These agencies differ a little in how they operate but their services typically include:

- assessment;
- counselling for all age groups;
- psychiatric assessment and interventions;
- family therapy;
- group interventions;
- bodywork such as massage, physiotherapy, acupuncture and pain management groups;
- assistance to overcome vocational and non-vocational barriers to employment;
- support groups;
- programs for children and youth;
- various strategies to increase the capacity of support networks and refugee communities to sustain their members.

**Making Referrals**

As previously mentioned, it is important for you to recognise that, unless you have had specialist training, you are not the best person to help your clients deal with trauma. This is not to say that you do not have an important role to play working with the specialist counsellor, ensuring your work complements the intervention ... but you should never try to tackle things alone. Always seek expert support.

It can sometimes be difficult to know when the behaviour a client is exhibiting warrants taking action and how important it is that the person sees a specialist. The following table therefore provides some useful guidance.

### Indications for Making a Referral for Torture Trauma Counselling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviours which, if persistent, suggest the need for a referral</th>
<th>Behaviours which STRONGLY suggest the need for an urgent referral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Uncontrolled or frequent crying or other extreme reactions to mildly stressful events</td>
<td>- Fear or threats of harm to self or others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sleep problems - too much or too little</td>
<td>- Extreme withdrawal, no emotional response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Depression</td>
<td>- Self destructive despair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anxiety</td>
<td>- Marked agitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anger</td>
<td>- Frequent retelling of a traumatic event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stress-related physical illness: headaches, stomach aches</td>
<td>- Uncontrolled activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inability to forget traumatic scenes</td>
<td>- Inability to care for oneself hygienically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Excessive ruminating or preoccupation with one idea</td>
<td>- Marked irritability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Blunting of emotions</td>
<td>- Fits of temper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Suicidal thoughts/plans</td>
<td>- Auditory hallucinations (hearing voices )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Extreme dependency and clinging</td>
<td>- Bizarre, irrational beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nightmares</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Excessive physiological startle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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28 It is recommended that you also refer to Topic 4 of CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants as this contains some additional information about this topic.

Most settlement support agencies have referral protocols with (pathways to) their local torture and trauma counselling service. If this does not exist, information about referrals can be found on the websites of each of the agencies.

These are the mechanics of referral but there is another more complicated aspect: helping the client to understand the purpose and benefits of counselling. The notion of going to a stranger to talk about your problems is quite alien ... and often very confrontational ... to many entrants. In most societies from which entrants come, problems are either dealt with by a trusted elder within the family or community or not dealt with at all. Further, for many, any form of abnormal behaviour is seen as a sign of ‘madness’ or possibly even ‘possession’. Considerable stigma is attached to this and family members will be inclined to keep it quiet, lest others in the community find out and shame will fall on the whole family.

As a worker, you have a critical role to play helping your clients to understand that counselling will be good for them and also that it is safe and confidential.

**Vicarious Traumatisation**

*I don’t have a problem stepping into their shoes, it’s the stepping out again that’s difficult*.  

Trauma is contagious. It is inevitable that some of the trauma an individual has experienced will be passed onto those who work with them. The chances of this happening are significantly increased if the worker:

- comes from a similar background;
- has had similar experiences;
- has family members in a similar situation;
- is linked in some way to the circumstances surrounding the trauma.

‘Vicarious traumatisation’ is the term used to describe this phenomenon. It comes about because the empathy that workers need in order to engage effectively with their clients can lead them to internalise their clients’ trauma and in so doing, become traumatised themselves.

Workers experiencing vicarious trauma sometimes display the same sort of symptoms as a person who has been directly traumatised ... and in some cases, the transference of trauma from clients reignites actual trauma in workers. Some of the more common symptoms of vicarious traumatisation in workers are the following:

- anxiety;
- depression;
- sleeping problems;
- depersonalisation: where the world becomes less real and the person feels like they are operating in a dream-like state;
- feeling overwhelmed by emotions such as anger and fear, grief, despair, shame, guilt;
- increased irritability;
- feeling of reduced personal accomplishment;

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procrastination;
• low self-esteem;
• having no time or energy for self or others;
• increased feelings of cynicism, sadness or seriousness;
• an increased sensitivity to violence and other forms of abuse, for example when watching television or a film;
• avoiding situations perceived as potentially dangerous;
• feeling profoundly distrustful of other people and the world in general;
• disruptions in interpersonal relationships; and
• substance (alcohol, nicotine or drug) abuse.

Connected to these experiences, vicarious traumatisation might also involve a change in a person’s beliefs about themselves, the world, and other people within it. This can involve:

• feeling that the world is no longer a ‘safe place’ (for themselves and/or others);
• feeling helpless and/or unable to take care of themselves or others;
• feeling their personal freedom is limited; and
• feelings of alienation (that their work sets them apart from others).

It is important not to view these reactions as medically or psychologically abnormal – because they are not. All research on this subject points out that these reactions are normal human reactions to repeated exposure to distressing events.

If left unaddressed, vicarious traumatisation is likely to have a negative impact on the worker’s:

• ability to interact constructively with clients;
• interactions with colleagues and the workplace environment;
• personal relationships.

It is often hard to recognise when you are suffering from … or slipping into … vicarious traumatisation. That it why it is very important to:

• know what to look out for;
• take some time to engage in self reflection;
• consciously take steps to avoid vicarious traumatisation (see below);
• recognise how beneficial supervision can be;
• ask for help when you first recognise signs of vicarious traumatisation – don’t leave it too late.

It is also very important to watch out for signs of traumatisation in those with whom you work. Sometimes the last person to know s/he is in trouble is the person themselves. If you are worried about a colleague, don’t ignore it, do something. Unless you know the person really well, it is best to refer the matter to your manager or a senior person within your agency who will have had experience supporting staff.

**Self Care Plans**

Anyone working with refugees and asylum seekers should have a **self-care plan** in place and also watch out for signs of vicarious traumatisation in themselves and others. If you think that you might be experiencing vicarious traumatisation, it is important that you look after yourself. Similarly if you see signs of vicarious
traumatisation in someone else, take responsibility by talking to them and encouraging them to take some time for themselves.

An effective self-care plan should address the whole person – physically, emotionally, behaviorally and spiritually - and include stress reducing activities in which a person will regularly engage.

Some tips for Self Care include:

- giving yourself permission to take time out doing non-refugee related things;
- treating yourself to some things that you really enjoy;
- avoiding using alcohol, sleeping pills or tranquilizers as a crutch;
- making sure your take leave;
- seeking someone to provide professional debriefing.

References


Listening to Children’s Voices: literature and the arts as means of responding to the effects of war, terrorism, and disaster. www.thefreelibrary.com/Listening+to+children’s+voices:+literature+and+the+arts+as+means+of+...-a0206851504

Activities

1. Think back to a time when something bad happened to you. What were the things that helped you to feel better and/or what personal strengths helped you through?
2. If you don’t know much about the work of your local torture and trauma counselling service, contact the service, identify who is the counsellor for your community or relevant team leader and arrange to meet with this person to find out more about what s/he does and about the service more generally.

3. Irrespective of whether you do the previous activity, visit the website of your local torture and trauma counselling service. Make a record of:

   The services the centre offers: ________________________________ ________________________________
   ________________________________ ________________________________
   ________________________________ ________________________________

   The resources they have: ____________________________________
   ________________________________ ________________________________
   ________________________________ ________________________________
   ________________________________ ________________________________

   The training courses they offer: ________________________________ ________________________________
   ________________________________ ________________________________
# Topic 10: Understanding the Challenges Faced by Clients

In **Topic 10** you will:

- explore the settlement challenges faced by refugees and other forced migrants;
- consider how past survival strategies can help or hinder your clients’ settlement;
- learn strategies for supporting new entrants.

## Settlement Challenges

Newly arrived refugees and other forced migrants confront a range of challenges when they first arrive in Australia, not least those relating to meeting their practical and emotional needs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Practical Needs</strong></th>
<th><strong>Emotional Needs</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-embarkation preparation</td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial information and orientation</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Control over the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Ability to plan for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Restoration of sense of dignity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income support</td>
<td>Regaining a sense of self worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Regaining a sense of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>Maintaining relationships within the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torture-trauma counselling</td>
<td>Becoming part of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal assistance</td>
<td>Support for special needs groups (e.g. unaccompanied minors, sole parents etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious expression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming part of the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a worker it is important you understand:

- the range of practical needs new entrants have;
- the importance of working with entrants to understand their priorities;
- the need to negotiate with entrants how to meet their priorities at the same time as meeting service delivery targets;
- the necessity to take clients’ emotional needs into account when addressing practical needs.
In addition, entrants face a range of other challenges adapting to life in Australia. These might include culture shock, isolation, language difficulties, health concerns, education, unemployment, an uncertain future, intolerance, discrimination, fear/distrust of authority, post traumatic stress disorder, family breakdown, loss of identity, missing homeland, depression, different gender expectations, debt (especially for SHP clients who have to repay tickets), disempowerment, shame, lack of community and friends, lack of information, climate changes, lack of the life skills required to manage complex western procedures/information, reliance on others, etc.

**Survival Strategies**

During the troubles in their countries of origin and while in countries of first asylum, entrants acquired a range of behaviours and tactics that served them well and kept them alive through some very difficult times. When they come to Australia, it takes time for them to sort out which of these strategies will help them in the new country and which will be a hindrance.

As an example, the ability to be flexible and cope with many different situations that has helped refugees negotiate their way to safety can also help them in Australia. On the other hand, refugees who have been accustomed to lying in order to get what they need will find that if they continue to do this, they will run into difficulties.

The challenge for workers is to recognise survival strategies for what they are and to be able to:

- identify the strategies that are still valuable in Australia and reinforce these;
- help entrants to realise why other survival strategies are counterproductive; and
- assist entrants to replace obsolete survival strategies with one that will be of benefit to them in Australia.

In addition to this, as a bicultural worker you might face some additional challenges in helping entrants learn effective survival skills. These include but are not limited to:

- identifying survival strategies in the first place – because you have had similar experiences, some of the things entrants do might be seen as ‘normal behaviour’ rather than a skill to be nurtured or reshaped;

- not allowing your new-found knowledge to influence your attitudes to the entrants. Some out of date survival strategies (such as lying about what they have been given) can make life very difficult for workers. If the same tactics are used by someone in your own community … and where your status within your community might be affected … it is easy to become angry towards the entrants and/or think of them as ‘ignorant’ or ‘ungrateful’;

- finding ways to help entrants learn new skills without being patronising or giving the impression that you think you are superior to them because you know how to operate within the new country whereas the entrants don’t.
Supporting Entrants

Every settlement worker should do everything possible to ensure that their behaviour towards their clients is:

- Respectful
- Empathetic
- Non-judgemental
- Flexible
- Patient.

It is also vital for you to be a reflective listener – in other words, someone that listens carefully to what your client says, thinks about this and takes it into consideration whenever decisions are being made.

References

The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) resources: www.scoa.org.au/resources

STARTTS website has several valuable research papers: www.startts.org.au

The Refugee Council Website also has research papers and useful advice on refugee issues. www.refugeecouncil.org.au

UNHCR Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees. UNHCR. www.unhcr.org

Participant Activities

1. Look at the two definitions of settlement that follow. How are they different? Which one do you think best captures your views about settlement? If neither does, write your own.

... a period of adjustment that migrants experience before they can participate in Australia’s culturally diverse society.\(^{31}\)

... a long-term dynamic process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equality and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to the full human resource potential in immigrant communities.\(^{32}\)

\(^{31}\) As presented in (then) DIAC’s Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants (2003) and other publications.

2. Go to the UNHCR website (www.unhcr.org) and use the search function to locate the UNHCR Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees. At the very least, read section 1.3. Try to make time to read more, in particular Part 2.

3. Cast your mind back to when you first arrived in Australia. What were the five most important things to you at that time?
   i. ________________________________________________________________
   ii. ______________________________________________________________
   iii. ______________________________________________________________
   iv. ______________________________________________________________
   v. _______________________________________________________________

4. Did you arrive in Australia with any survival strategies that you discovered did not work so well in Australia? If so, what were they and what happened when you tried to use them? How did you learn about the need to change these?
Topic 11: Making Best Use of Settlement Services

In **Topic 11** you will learn about the range of services available to refugees and other forced migrants and how to:

- make appropriate referrals;
- ensure relevant services are incorporated into settlement plans;
- work with colleagues from other services to ensure the best outcomes for your clients.

### Settlement Services

Refugees and humanitarian program entrants receive support from a wide range of sources including:

- programs and services funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS);
- programs and services provided or funded by other government (federal, state and local) agencies;
- services that receive funds from the community and/or religious institutions;
- volunteers from both refugee groups and the mainstream community.

The following table (originally introduced in Topic 2) outlines some of the key programs through which services for refugees and humanitarian program entrants are funded. It is by no means all inclusive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DSS Funded Programs</th>
<th>Key Programs Funded by Other Government Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP)</td>
<td>English as a Second Language Program (ESL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Services Program (SSP)</td>
<td>Specialist Torture and Trauma Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support Program</td>
<td>Specialist Health and Mental Health Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For more information go to <a href="http://www.dss.gov.au">www.dss.gov.au</a></td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, refugees and humanitarian program entrants have full entitlements to all the services provided to permanent residents and citizens of Australia, including:
• Centrelink
• Medicare
• jobactive
• Public housing
• Family support programs
• Youth programs
• Aged care
• Primary, secondary and tertiary education
• Sport and recreation programs etc.

The websites of the government agencies that provide and/or fund these services are included in the Resources section at the end of this topic. Visiting the websites is the best way to get up to date information about services that specifically target refugees and humanitarian program entrants, as well as mainstream services in areas applicable to these entrants.

Community Sector Services

While government agencies play an important role in planning service frameworks, with a few exceptions, the actual delivery of services is done by the community sector. It is within this sector that most workers will be employed and it is with this sector that entrants will come into most contact.

There are many different groups who come under the broad title of ‘community sector’. They include:

• community-run organisations;
• church/religious based organisations;
• ethno-specific community welfare agencies;
• volunteers (from both the mainstream and refugee communities);
• proposers (sponsors) and community support groups.

In addition, there are other agencies that perform the same or similar functions that fit into a rather ambiguous space that is neither government nor community. Included in this are:

• for-profit companies;
• some service delivery arms of government (e.g. Centrelink).

Between them, the community sector agencies, complemented by volunteers and Special Humanitarian Program proposers, provide crucial support to humanitarian entrants. The many and various services provided by community sector agencies fall into the following broad categories:

• **Individualised Support and Direct Client Services** including settlement and employment support and supporting the inclusion of children into school and childcare.

• **Community Development** with refugee and migrant communities.

• **Community Education** including promoting multiculturalism, combating racism and raising awareness of the settlement experiences of refugees and migrants.
• **Building Sector and Organisational Capacity**, including the development of pools of cultural support workers and volunteers and participating in relevant networks.

• **Multicultural Advocacy** with a specific focus on achieving systemic and structural change to redress inequities in mainstream services for people from diverse cultural backgrounds.\(^{33}\)

The 'frontline' services for newly arrived humanitarian entrants are those provided in the context of the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP). This program is designed to assist entrants through the very crucial first 6-18 months after arrival.

The HSP is intended to support clients to achieve outcomes in the following areas:

- **English**
- **Education and Training**
- **Employment**
- **Housing**
- **Physical and Mental Health and Well Being**
- **Managing Money**
- **Community Participation and Networking**
- **Family Functioning and Social Support**
- **Justice**

These outcomes are further explained in the HSP Outcomes Framework.\(^{34}\)

**Referral Protocols**

It is not enough to know what services are available in your local area, you also need to know how to refer clients to them.

Each service has its own requirements (**referral protocol**) for how they want referrals to be made. Case managers or supervisors should be able to provide the necessary information about referral protocols for local agencies.

**Settlement Plans**

Topic 9 of CHCSET001: *Work with Forced Migrants* explains how to undertake a needs assessment for a settlement plan then how to go on to develop, implement and evaluate a settlement plan.

The key lessons for bicultural workers about settlement plans are:

- settlement plans are developed for new humanitarian entrants. These plans are developed in consultation with entrants and should take into account the specific needs of each of the members of the entrant group. They become a ‘plan of action’ for the caseworker and something against which progress can be assessed;

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\(^{33}\) Adapted from MDA’s Strategic Plan: 2008-10. [www.mdainc.org.au](http://www.mdainc.org.au).

• an integral part of a settlement plan is the strategy for linking the entrants into relevant services in the local area;

• workers who are required to develop settlement plans as part of their duties will be given instruction in how to do this;

• successful implementation of a settlement plan is not just the responsibility of the caseworker but of everyone who is involved with working with the entrants;

• it is essential that everyone working with an entrant makes a point of finding out who else is supporting the entrant and that they be careful to ensure that the support they will provide will link into or complement that provided by others.

The last two points are critical. Supporting humanitarian entrants is not something that any one person or agency can do. It has to be seen as a cooperative effort with everyone ‘pulling in the same direction’.

References

Information about key services:

DSS-funded programs:

• www.dss.gov.au

Torture and Trauma Counselling Services:

• Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASTT): www.fastt.org.au

Refugee Health:

• NSW: Refugee Health Service: www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/sswahs/refugee
• NT: www.gpnnt.org.au
• SA: South Australian Refugee Health Network: www.sarhn.org.au
• TAS: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au
• VIC: Refugee Health Network: www.refugeehealthnetwork.org.au
• WA: Western Australian Refugee Health Network: www.warhn.org

State and Territory governments:

• www.multicultural.vic.gov.au
• www.multicultural.nsw.gov.au
• www.multicultural.qld.gov.au
• www.multicultural.sa.gov.au
• www.equalopportunity.wa.gov.au
• www.dpac.tas.gov.au
• www.dhcs.act.gov.au
• www.multicultural.nt.gov.au.
Activities

1. Use a search engine to find information about the following government services and summarise the information presented.

i. Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP)

ii. Settlement Services Program (SSP)

iii. Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

iv. Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)
2. Look closely at the quote\textsuperscript{35} from Carla, a Sudanese refugee settled in Australia:

‘...Until the war in Sudan we had a good life and plans for our children. Then everything is taken away in the blink of an eye and you have to flee for your life...You go to a new country but you don’t know where to, or how to start. You leave behind those you know, your family and community.

But the Government and service providers did so much to make our lives easier. I want to thank the Australian Government for supporting us and giving my children a new future. I look forward to when they finish their education and join the workforce, so they can give back to a country that has given us so much.’

What are the key lessons for a settlement worker in Carla’s words?

3. Having learnt about the range of services available to refugees and other forced migrants, is there an area that particularly interests you? What is this the case?

\textsuperscript{35} Multicultural Development Association. Refugee Information. \url{www.mdainc.org}
4. How will the above influence you in:
   i. your thinking about future training needs?
   ii. your thinking about the agency for which you would like to work?
Topic 12: Recap and Reflection

This final session is an opportunity for you and your classmates to reflect upon the things you have learnt and to think about how you can use these:

- in preparing yourself to work as a bicultural worker;
- while working as a bicultural worker.

In class, your teacher will have asked you to reflect upon:

- the skills and strategies you have learnt that you think will be the most valuable for you in meeting the many challenges you will face as bicultural workers;
- your thoughts about any future training needs you have identified.

This was done as a group exercise. You might like to do it just for yourself.

1. What skills and strategies do you think will be most useful to you?

2. What more training do you think will help you to achieve your employment objectives?

Some final thoughts to take with you:

Never stop learning
Always keep an open mind
Self-awareness = empowerment
Appendix 1

WORKING DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Government of Western Australia: Office of Multicultural Interests

Acculturation
The process whereby the attitudes and/or behaviours of people from one culture are modified as a result of contact with a different culture. Acculturation implies a mutual influence in which elements of two cultures mingle and merge.

Ancestry
Describes the ethnic or cultural heritage of a person, that is, the ethnic or cultural groups to which a person’s forebears are or were attached. In practice, Ancestry is the ethnic or cultural groups which the person identifies as being his or her ancestry.

Anglo-Saxon
The collective term commonly used to describe people whose ancestry originates from the country of England in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Anglo-Celtic
The collective term commonly used to describe people whose ancestry originates from England and/or Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Assimilation
The process whereby members of an ethnic group shed their traditions and culture and adopt the customs and attitudes of the mainstream culture. In Australia, assimilation policy was the Government’s response to the influx of refugees and immigrants from war-torn Europe from 1945 to the early 1960s. Although this was officially replaced by a policy of ‘integration’, until the early 1970s, assimilation remained the final goal and reflected the values embedded in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 (known as the White Australia Policy).

Asylum seekers
People who have applied for recognition as refugees under the United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, but whose cases have yet to be determined.

Caucasian
A term based on the now discredited method of racial classification. The term is used by some Australian agencies, for people of fair complexion and usually of European origin. It is also a definition for a ‘broad division of humankind covering peoples of Europe, Western Asia, South Asia, and parts of North Africa’. The Office of Multicultural Interests does not encourage the use of this or similar racial descriptors, such as ‘mongoloid’ or ‘negroid’.

36 It is noted that this glossary includes some Western Australian specific information but it is felt that the contents are of sufficient general relevance to include in an unedited form.
Celtic
The collective term commonly used to describe people whose ancestry originates from the countries of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the county of Cornwall and the Isle of Man in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Citizenship
Citizenship traditionally signifies legal, political and national identity. It brings with it certain rights and responsibilities. Active citizenship refers to individuals working towards the betterment of their community through economic participation, public service, volunteer work and other such efforts. Active citizens may not have formal/legal citizenship status. Democratic citizenship reflects sensitivity to different needs, claims and interests within the accepted principles, practices and legal norms of the broader political community.

Cross-Cultural Training
A process aimed at developing the awareness, knowledge and skills need to interact appropriately and effectively with culturally diverse customers and co-workers.

Cultural Competence
A set of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that individuals, professions, organisations and systems use to work effectively in culturally diverse situations. The ability of systems, organisations, professions and individuals to work effectively in culturally diverse environments and situations.

Cultural Competencies
A set of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that individuals, professions, organisations and systems use to work effectively in culturally diverse situations. The ability of systems, organisations, professions and individuals to work effectively in culturally diverse environments and situations.

Two subsets of cultural competency are:

- **Cultural awareness**: the understanding that there is difference. Also an understanding of the social, economic and political context in which people exist.
- **Cultural sensitivity**: legitimising this difference: a process of self-exploration that enables us to see how our own life experiences impact upon others.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD)
Culturally and linguistically diverse refers to the wide range of cultural groups and individuals that make up the Australian population. It 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. For ease, CaLD is commonly used as an abbreviation for culturally and linguistically diverse.

Cultural Diversity
A description of a society composed of people from many cultural and linguistic groups. This term is frequently used to mean multiethnic, multifaith or multilingual in the Australian context.

Cultural Pluralism
A term used to describe a society in which ethnic groups are encouraged to maintain and promote their culture, language and heritage within society.
Culture
Culture comprises four elements – values, norms, institutions and artifacts – that are passed on from one generation to another. Cultures are dynamic and constantly evolving.

Democratic Pluralism
A term used to describe a society in which the rights of all groups to participate as full and equal members of society are safeguarded and protected within a framework of citizenship. It is different from cultural pluralism, which focuses only on cultural difference, because it recognises the range of differences that exist between individuals and within communities, such as age, physical and intellectual ability, gender, and socio-economic background.

Discrimination
Discrimination occurs when a person, or a group of people, are treated less favourably than another person or group because of age; race; colour; national or ethnic origin; sex; pregnancy or marital status; disability; religion; sexual orientation; or some other central characteristic.

Discrimination happens when a person is denied the opportunity to participate freely and fully in normal day-to-day activities. It might include harassment or victimisation in the workplace; being unable to gain physical access to a building or facility; being denied goods and services; difficulty in obtaining appropriate accommodation and housing; or not being able to join a trade union.

Discrimination is characterised into two forms:

- **Direct (overt) discrimination** occurs when one person or group of people receive less favourable treatment than another person or group in the same position would have received on the grounds of their age, race, colour, national or ethnic origin; sex; pregnancy or marital status; disability; religion; sexual orientation; or some other central characteristic.

- **Indirect (covert) discrimination** includes practices and policies that appear to be 'neutral' or 'fair' because they treat everyone in the same way but adversely affect a higher proportion of people of a group of people characterised by age, race, colour, national or ethnic origin; sex; pregnancy or marital status; disability; religion; sexual orientation; or some other central characteristic. It can occur even when there is no intention to discriminate.

Equality
**Formal Equality** - prescribes equal treatment of all people regardless of circumstances, on the understanding that all have the same rights and entitlements. Its underlying logic is that by extending equal rights to all, inequality has been eliminated. Sameness of treatment is equated with fairness of treatment. Formal Equality does not take into account the accumulated disadvantage of generations of discrimination or the disadvantage faced by groups by a system that fails to recognise different needs.

**Substantive Equality** - involves achieving equitable outcomes as well as equal opportunity. It takes into account the effects of past discrimination. It recognises that rights, entitlements, opportunities and access are not equally distributed throughout society. Substantive Equality recognises that equal or the same application of rules to unequal groups can have unequal results.

Where service delivery agencies cater to the dominant, majority group, then people who are different may miss out on essential services. Hence, it is necessary to treat people differently because people have different needs.
**Equity**
Equity refers to the quality of being fair and just. Social Equity refers to policies, programs and services that meet the needs of all individuals and groups and enable all to participate as full and equal members in all aspects of society.

**Ethnic**
An adjective used to describe a population of human beings whose members identify with each other, usually on the basis of a presumed common ancestry; recognition by others as a distinct group; or by common cultural, linguistic, religious or territorial traits.

**Ethnicity**
Membership of a particular cultural group. It is defined by shared cultural practices including but not limited to holidays, food, language and customs. People can share the same nationality but have different ethnic groups, while people who share an ethnic identity can be of different nationalities.

**Ethnic Group/Community**
A group/community established based on ethnicity (see above).

**Ethnocentrism**
The tendency to judge all other cultures by the norms and standards of one's own culture, especially with regard to language, behaviour, customs and religions, as a way of making sense of the world.

**First Generation Australian**
A first generation of a family to live in Australia.

**Immigrant**
A person who leaves one country to settle permanently in another. In Australia the following terms are used to differentiate between immigrants who arrive in Australia through two immigration programs.
- The term ‘migrants’ is used when referring to people who enter through Australia’s Migration Programs which are the Skilled Stream and the Family Stream.
- The term ‘refugees’ is used when referring to people who enter through Australia’s Humanitarian Program.

**Integration**
Generally describes the process of developing a society that respects, values and draws on the ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of the population. Unlike the process of assimilation, integration does not involve the shedding of traditions and cultures by ethnic groups and adopting the customs and attitudes of the mainstream. Rather it involves the development of a dynamic culture that draws on the diversity of the traditions of the variety of ethnic groups.

**Mainstream**
Refers to the prevalent attitudes, values, and practices of the majority group in a society.

**Minority Communities**
Everyone belongs to an ‘ethnic group’ of one sort or another. However, non-dominant ethnic groups are often referred to as ‘minorities’. Minority groups can include ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.
Multiculturalism
A term used to describe the recognition of cultural and ethnic diversity. It means all Australians are entitled to exercise their rights and participate fully in society, regardless of their different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds.

New and emerging communities
A term used to describe ethnic communities that are small in number, have recently settled in Australia and often lack established family networks, support systems, community structures and resources, relative to more established communities.

Prejudice
Unfounded opinions or attitudes relating to an individual or group that represents them unfavourably or negatively. Prejudice may be directed at a person the basis of race, skin colour, language, religion or culture.

Race
The term 'race' is an artificial construct used to classify people on the basis of supposed physical and cultural similarities deriving from their ancestry. Although there is no scientific evidence to support the existence of human races, people tend to assume that there are racial categories. Under the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984 race includes colour, descent, ethnic or national origin or nationality and may comprise two or more distinct races.

Racism
A belief or ideology that creates artificial social divisions on the basis of characteristics or abilities specific to a particular 'race' which distinguishes it as being either superior or inferior to another 'race' or 'races'.

Second Generation Australian
A person born in Australia who has at least one parent born overseas.

Social Capital
Generally refers to the quality of social interactions, trust and networks between individuals, families, communities and governments for mutual benefit. The core idea of social capital is that social networks have value.

Social Cohesion
A process that involves a complex set of social relations. It is constructed on the foundations of institutional, political and social structures that ensure the wellbeing of all citizens. Social Cohesion takes in four aspects of welfare: equity in access to rights, the dignity and recognition of each person, autonomy and personal fulfilment, and the possibility of participating as a full member of society.

Social Exclusion
Relates to the sense of isolation and estrangement that certain people experience within a society, and the discriminatory practices of individuals and institutions that limit, or prevent, the exercising of rights, such as democratic participation, and access to opportunities and resources such as housing, employment and healthcare. The sense of exclusion may be based on characteristics such as culture, ethnicity, nationality, religion, perceived 'race', sexuality and physical or intellectual ability.
Social Inclusion
Suggests that members of society, irrespective of age, ethnicity, social background etc, have a sense of belonging to and a stake in the social, economic, political and cultural systems of their society.

Tolerance
Willingness to recognise and respect the beliefs or practices of others. The Office of Multicultural Interests avoids the use of the word in the context of multiculturalism due to its association with the act of enduring something that is troublesome or of which one does not approve.

Youth/Young People
In Australia, the terms ‘youth’ and ‘young people’ are used interchangeably and refer to people between the ages of 12 and 25 (inclusive).