Bicultural Work With Refugees

Trainer’s Resource Guide
Margaret Piper

CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia
This Guide was:

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Feedback from Course Participants

This is the first course that I have done in Australia. I understand more about working with other cultures, dealing with different people, solving problems and planning.

I want to enhance my knowledge in this field in more professional way, know my boundaries and also my security level. This course will make me a professional qualified settlement worker and will help me secure a better job in this field. I also wanted to do this course to be more knowledgeable and have a qualification that can be recognised in many workplaces related to this field of study.
About the Unit

CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia (originally CHCSW402B) was developed to supplement CHCSW401A: Work Effectively with Forced Migrants (now CHCSET001) and is intended for a particular target audience, namely 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.

Many of those selecting this unit are likely to be people who are reasonably recent arrivals to Australia (i.e. have been here for less than 5 years) and are being sought by employers because of their cultural and linguistic skills. It is probable that their educational backgrounds will differ considerably, with some being highly educated and others having had disrupted formal education. They might or might not have had:

- any workplace experience in Australia;
- employment experience overseas (in their home country or while in exile);
- experience in some form of client support role.

Further, it is not possible to make any assumptions about how well they understand Australian institutions and how these institutions operate and interrelate.

The purpose of this unit is to prepare the participants for the many challenges they will face learning about the Australian workplace and about being a bicultural worker within it. This requires that they:

- think deeply about who they are and their perceptions of the world;
- learn about the legal and cultural aspects of the Australian workplace environment;
- reflect on what adjustments they must make in order to perform their duties;
- learn a set of skills that will help them negotiate the complex task of being both a worker for and member of their own community.

Before progressing further, however, it is important to clarify the intended meaning of some of the terms that are used in throughout this manual.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forced Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Australian context, it is a useful term to describe the principal recipients of settlement services. It succinctly embraces people who have:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- entered Australia under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- been granted refugee status in Australia or an excised territory;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- entered as business and skilled migrants but where the prime motivation for leaving was to escape violence and/or persecution;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- arrived with a family reunion visa linked to anyone in the above categories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 It is highly recommended that those selecting this unit also take CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants.

(CC) Navitas English, AMES Australia, MDA Ltd and MPA
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’).

| Refugee | The term ‘refugee’ is used colloquially in many ways but in the context of this unit, it will be used in its legal sense as set out in international law (in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees). 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.

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\(^2\) As presented in (then) DIAC’s *Report of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants* (2003) and other publications.

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.

**Bicultural Worker**

Someone employed to deliver settlement-services because of their cultural and linguistic skills.

**NOTE:** definitions of other relevant terms are included in Appendix 1.

## Course Overview

This course has been developed in a format that allows the unit to be delivered over **12 sessions** of **2 hours** of face-to-face instruction.

It has also been developed to be delivered entirely off the job in the organisation’s training rooms through a combination of small group and individual activities.

The following table outlines the course breakdown and identifies the performance criteria addressed in each session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Performance Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Setting the Scene</td>
<td>1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The role of government in Australia</td>
<td>1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Laws Governing the Australian workplace</td>
<td>1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Understanding the Australian workplace</td>
<td>2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Operating within the Australian workplace</td>
<td>2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The bicultural worker in the Australian workplace</td>
<td>2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What it means to be a bicultural worker</td>
<td>2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.3, 3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Understanding and managing boundaries</td>
<td>1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 2.3, 4.1, 4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Working with traumatised clients</td>
<td>3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Understanding the challenges faced by clients</td>
<td>2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elements and Performance Criteria

The following elements and performance criteria are embedded within CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia.

Elements define the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.

Performance Criteria specify the level of performance required to demonstrate achievement of the Element. Terms in italics are elaborated in the Range Statement below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Performance Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Work within the Australian context | 1.1 Identify and follow Australian management processes, cultural protocols, organisation procedures and legislative requirements  
1.2 Identify and analyse differences between Australian processes and own cultural process  
1.3 Identify differences in relation to working as a person from a culturally diverse background within mainstream Australia society  
1.4 Adjust approaches in light of new information and protocols |
| 2. Operate within the Workplace | 2.1 Identify organisation goals and priorities  
2.2 Identify own role and responsibilities and confirm in accordance with organisation procedures  
2.3 Prioritise competing demands to achieve organisation’s goals and objectives  
2.4 Identify and use professional networks to build and develop relationships  
2.5 Identify factors and contingencies affecting the achievement of work objectives and document allowances in work plans |
| 3. Recognise and deal with trauma and vicarious trauma | 3.1 Identify the overt and covert signs of trauma in clients and the support framework available for such clients  
3.2 Evaluate the options for specialist support and/or referrals while continuing to work with the client in line with organisation guidelines |
### Assessment

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

If participants successfully complete the unit and are assessed as Competent, they 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 a student is assessed as Not Yet Competent you will need to arrange another assessment opportunity with him or her.

### Performance Evidence

The candidate must show evidence of the 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. There must be evidence that the candidate has:

- 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.

### Knowledge Evidence

The candidate must 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 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.

Assessors must satisfy the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015/AQTF mandatory competency requirements for assessors.

**Assessment Appeals Procedures**

If students wish to have their assessment results reviewed they may request this through you immediately after they have participated in the assessment. You will need to ask the course coordinator to arrange a reassessment of the student’s work. Any unresolved disputes may be referred to the relevant RTO Manager. Appeals against assessment results must be made within six months of the assessment or before the issuing of certification, whichever comes first.

**Assessment Guide**

An **Assessment Guide** containing assessment tasks, a validated assessment matrix and an answering guide for trainers can be ordered by RTOs (upon proof of RTO status) from AMES Australia: [enquiries@multiculturalhub.com.au](mailto:enquiries@multiculturalhub.com.au). For any further information please contact Margaret Piper at [margpiper@optusnet.com.au](mailto:margpiper@optusnet.com.au).

This Trainer's Guide is part of a package of materials designed to support CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia. The other materials are a Participant’s Handbook and an Assessment Guide (access limited to Registered Training Organisations).

The training materials are available on a number of websites including:

- AMES Australia: [http://www.ames.net.au/bookshop](http://www.ames.net.au/bookshop)
**About the Topic Notes**

As previously mentioned, an earlier iteration of CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia (CHCSW402B) was developed to supplement CHCSW401A: Work Effectively with Forced Migrants (now CHCSET001), and with a very specific target audience in mind. The success of Australia’s settlement programs for refugees and other forced migrants has depended heavily on the participation of people from the same background as the entrants. In many cases these people are themselves refugees and they are sometimes relatively new to life in Australia. This unit is intended to help prepare them for the challenges they will face working in the settlement sector.

This **Trainer’s Guide** and the accompanying **Participant’s Handbook** and **Assessment Guide** have been developed by a team of people with specific expertise in both training and the delivery of settlement services to forced migrants.

This Trainer’s Guide is more comprehensive than many guides but this has been done intentionally, recognising that some or all of the content matter might be new to many who are tasked with teaching this unit.

In the following sections you will find background information about the issues covered in this unit, some suggestions about activities you might wish to use in class and some useful references. Also included are links to the accompanying activities that are included in the Participant’s Handbook.

Please be mindful that it is not intended that the material in this Guide be prescriptive. Rather, it is offered as a resource to assist you to teach this unit. Further:

- It is not expected that you will ‘teach’ everything in this guide. In relation to this two important points should be noted:
  - You should consider the material contained in the CHCSET002 Participant’s Handbook to be ‘core material’ and everything else to be there for your information. It is hoped that this additional information will contextualise the core material for you and help you to support any discussion that takes place in class.
  - There are topics that are very ‘dense’ in terms of the amount of information they contain. It is recommended that rather than trying to ‘teach’ all the information, you ask participants to prepare for the class by reading relevant sections from their handbook, thus allowing you time in class to engage the participants in discussion and to do the suggested activities.
  - The timings and order of content shown at the beginning of each topic are offered as suggestions only.
  - It is expected that you will adapt the lessons’ formats to suit your own preferred teaching style.

The activities suggested in this Guide are suggestions only. There is nothing to preclude you from using an activity of your own devising that covers the same content or substituting one of the activities in the Participant’s Handbook for a suggested class activity.
It is up to you to decide what use you want to make of the activities in the Participant’s Handbook (and which are also listed in this Guide at the end of each topic). As indicated above, you might wish to use them in class. Alternatively, you can assign any or all of them as homework or you might just wish to draw the participants’ attention to them and encourage those who are interested to complete the activities to supplement that which has been covered in class.

Finally, it is important to note every effort was made to ensure that facts and website links in this Guide were accurate at the time of publication. Things will, however, inevitably change over time and it is important to check the currency each time you teach this material.

**Employability Skills**

It is highly likely that the concept of Employability Skills is very familiar to you and if so, you can possibly bypass the following section, though you might wish to give some thought to the importance of ensuring that the way you teach this unit is solidly underpinned by an Employability Skills framework. The reason for this is that the targeted participants of this course are people who have probably had limited exposure to life in Australia and also to the Australian workplace and will thus not have had the same opportunities to learn key skills as those who have grown up in Australia, attended Australian schools and had workplace experience.

**What are employability skills?**

Employability skills are the skills that help us to perform well at work. We gain them not only from the workplace, but from life with our families, communities and schools. They are, in effect, skills for life.

Employers value these skills highly because they are easily transferred from one work situation to another. With the nature of jobs changing so much, everyone needs to be able to adapt and learn continuously.

The skills which employers are looking for have been identified through ‘Employability Skills for the Future’; a project funded by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and endorsed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

The core Employability Skills have been identified as being:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Planning and organising
- Initiative and enterprise
- Problem Solving
- Self Management
- Technology
- Learning.

Basically employability skills are an employer’s wish list stating ‘this is what we want, demonstrate that you have some of these skills and can learn the others and we will employ you’.

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4 This section draws heavily on Working Well: Recognising Employability Skills. 2006 © State of New South Wales through the Department of Education and Training.
The application of Employability Skills of course varies from workplace to workplace but the following tables give some insights into employer expectations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Teamwork</th>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
<th>Initiative and Enterprise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Listening and understanding workplace information</td>
<td>1. Working as an individual and a member of a team</td>
<td>1. Developing practical responses to workplace related functions</td>
<td>1. Adapting to new and emerging situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Clearly communicating workplace information to others</td>
<td>2. Working with diverse individuals and groups</td>
<td>2. Solving workplace issues and problems individually or in teams</td>
<td>2. Being creative or proactive in response to workplace problems, changes and challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading and interpreting workplace related documentation</td>
<td>3. Applying knowledge of own role as part of a team</td>
<td>3. Applying a range of strategies in workplace problem solving</td>
<td>3. Identifying workplace related opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Writing to audience needs</td>
<td>4. Applying teamwork skills to a range of workplace situations</td>
<td>4. Taking the workplace context into account in problem solving</td>
<td>4. Generating a range of options in response to workplace matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Interpreting needs of customers (internal or external)</td>
<td>5. Identifying and utilising the strengths of other team members</td>
<td>5. Taking action to resolve concerns</td>
<td>5. Translating ideas into appropriate action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Establishing and using appropriate networks (informal or formal)</td>
<td>6. Receiving and giving feedback and, where in job role, providing coaching and mentoring</td>
<td>6. Using numeracy skills (e.g. working within budgets, developing and managing budgets, taking measurements)</td>
<td>6. Developing innovative solutions to workplace challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Negotiating effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Developing a strategic, creative, long-term vision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Planning and Organising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning and Organising</th>
<th>Self Management</th>
<th>Learning</th>
<th>Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Collecting, analysing and organising workplace data</td>
<td>1. Having personal goals and vision</td>
<td>1. Participating in ongoing learning (formal or informal)</td>
<td>1. Using business related technology and equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Using business systems for planning and organising</td>
<td>2. Applying the formal workplace vision and mission</td>
<td>2. Seeking out and learning new ideas, skills and techniques</td>
<td>2. Applying business related technology skills in organising and using workplace information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Working within, or establishing, clear project goals and outcomes</td>
<td>5. Taking personal responsibility at the appropriate level</td>
<td>5. Contributing to or developing learning plans (self or others)</td>
<td>5. Comparing and recommending new business technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Allocating resources to workplace tasks and requirements</td>
<td>7. Following workplace documentation such as codes of practice or operating procedures</td>
<td>7. Maintaining knowledge of products and services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Identifying risk factors and taking action to minimise risk</td>
<td>8. Being a role model and leader</td>
<td>8. Improving performance and skills through experimentation, and practice or rehearsal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Maintaining personal hygiene</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Projecting a professional image</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training for Employability Skills

Training for Employability Skills is about making these skills explicit to participants and helping to ensure they have the appropriate skills and knowledge they need for work.

There are many different ways that you might train for Employability Skills and you may use different approaches for different learners and different programs. The following advice has been gathered from trainers in a range of different contexts.

It will cover:

- creating work contexts,
- being a role model of employability,
- useful techniques and strategies,
- providing reflective opportunities for learners.

i. Creating Work Contexts

As a trainer you need to foster certain behaviours which will prepare learners for employment.

Creating work contexts throughout the training is a very useful way of getting learners to think about workplace requirements and preparing them for what the workplace will be like. The training space has to be a safe environment for learners so that effective learning can take place through trial and error, mistakes and questioning.

There are a number of strategies you can use to create work-like environments for learners. These might include:

- making the training area like work i.e. introduce some rules and practices which reflect work rather than a typical learning environment eg
  - always turn up on time,
  - ensure work is completed on time,
  - provide a phone number to call in about absence or lateness,
  - ensure people observe time frames for breaks,
  - turn telephones off during training;

- using a range of delivery modes, noting that:
  - work or work-like activities introduce and apply good work practice,
  - integrated project-based learning is good for developing skills in planning, organising and initiative,
  - group work is good for communication, teamwork and problem solving,
  - simulation and role plays are also good for communication and teamwork,
  - research-based learning is very good for problem solving, planning and organising, technology and learning,
  - coaching/mentoring/buddy systems are also a good strategy for individual learners to help them develop their skills where there is a deficit;

- encouraging project-based learning: set work-like projects for learners that will require them to use one or multiple Employability Skills. At various times the trainer can identify that they have used them and ask them how they could do it better;

- addressing individual skill needs where required: sometimes you may need to deliver specific training in one or more of the skills. For example, you might organise a program in team building or innovation skills or conflict resolution. These may be delivered through intervention coaching and mentoring.
ii. Being a Role Model of Employability

It is not fair or sensible to expect from your learners certain behaviours if you do not live up to your own expectations. That means that you also need to:

- be punctual and return work promptly,
- wear work-like clothes,
- treat the learners as adults rather than as children,
- approach the training program as a joint endeavour with short and long term goals,
- create a team atmosphere rather than a competitive atmosphere,
- encourage initiative by seeking ideas and suggestions,
- encourage self-management. Give the learner responsibility for managing their work as much as possible. Use contracts, buddies, planning tools and so on,
- use the technology of the workplace in the way it is used at work,
- use the language of work.

iii. Useful Techniques and Strategies

The following table gives examples of things that you can do to help participants enhance their Employability Skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employability Skill</th>
<th>Some Techniques and Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>- Base instructions on real work procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Write scripts for learners to practice their conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Pair listening exercises with a checklist for good listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Encourage learners to view things from different perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Develop accuracy by getting learners to find their own mistakes in their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Use role plays to act out different communication scenarios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>- Provide some guidelines on functioning teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Give learners tools to help them identify and work through team goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Encourage learners to analyse and review how the team worked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Get learners to identify the strengths, weaknesses and preferences within the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Give learners a process to guide them as they work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>- Compare effectiveness of solving a problem as an individual and solving problems as a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Encourage learners to use different problem solving strategies to solve problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Have learners brainstorm all of the different ways to solve problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Get learners to plan how they would solve a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Discuss successful outcomes they may have experienced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
iv. Provide Reflective Opportunities

The key to learning Employability Skills is making what underpins them conscious. In order to make it conscious there needs to be some sort of criteria or framework to use as a basis to critique.

Because Employability Skills often involve complex human interactions and mind processes, it is hard to accurately describe how to communicate effectively, how to think critically and so on. They are often a mix of skill, process and behaviour. Many people believe that many of these things cannot be learnt, however that is not true. There are ways you can learn to be more creative, a better communicator, a better team player, and so on.

But like anything you have to first understand what it exactly means and what you can do about it. This is why as a trainer you need to be able to provide some clear guidelines about what the learners can do and give them the opportunity to discuss and reflect on what they have done.
The following might help you think about how this can be done.

After a team project is completed, have the team report back on the outcome and also the process. How well did the team work together? You will need to give them some criteria to help them.

At the end of a course, ask learners to assess how well they managed themselves. What else should they have done? What would they need to do at work?

If they have been problem solving, either as a group or on their own, have them review the process. How well did they:
- gather information,
- think creatively,
- collaborate,
- reflect,
- check?

Another activity to help them reflect is to get them to think how these skills would translate to the workplace:

What would be important in their chosen occupational area in order to communicate?

What sorts of problems would they need to solve? What strategies would be best?

What would be initiative and what would be risky?

What would the goals be of teams working in their occupational area? How would you know if it was a functional or dysfunctional team?

What technology skills are needed?

What sort of supervisory structure is usual in the industry?

How important is self-management as opposed to being managed by another?

How is learning relevant in the occupation? Do knowledge and skills change a lot? What types of learning are relevant?
About the Participants

Important Information for Trainers

As indicated in the previous section, this unit is intended for a particular target audience. There is therefore value in spending a little time reflecting on the potential participants and their learning needs before looking at information and activities specific to this session.

Many of those electing to take this unit are likely to be people from refugee backgrounds who have little or no experience in the Australian workplace. Others might have come as migrants. Their reason for doing this course is that they have either been employed by or want to seek employment with an agency whose clients include people from refugee and other forced migrant backgrounds.

Noting that the following includes gross generalisations and within the target group from whom the participants are drawn there will be enormous variation in experiences, aptitude and application, it is possible to say that participants will confront a range of challenges when they enter the Australian workplace. These include but are not limited to the following:

i. Emotional Challenges

For people from forced migrant background, being able to get a job is an important part of the journey towards regaining a sense of ‘normality’. It provides them with a sense of self-worth and dignity; they are no longer dependent on others; they can begin to take control. It is therefore not just ‘a job’ but a new beginning. As a result, a great deal of emotional energy is vested in this, with people going through a range of sometimes conflicting emotions including:

- fear of the unknown ... of not knowing what is expected of them and what to do;
- fear of failure ... the idea that you might not be able to do the work;
- frustration (and even anger) ... that the work is not what they were trained to do. For those who have held senior positions at home, this might even be linked to their perception that the work is ‘beneath them’;
- grief ... for the loss of their professional dreams;
- excitement ... about finally having secured a job;
- pride ... that they are no longer dependent;
- relief ... that the next stage of their journey has finally begun.

One of the key challenges that you – as a trainer – face in teaching this unit is to help the participants identify how they are feeling about their entry into the workplace and to ‘normalise’ the range of emotions. Knowing that it is normal to feel all the cocktail of emotions they have can often help people put them into perspective rather than have them become a disabling burden.

ii. Organisational Challenges

Living and working in Australia requires that you are organised and punctual ... and few concessions are made if you are not. If you do not pay your bills on time, you will be charged extra; if you do not arrive on time for an appointment, it will be cancelled and you will miss out ... This is very different to the situation from which many participants came where ‘time’ was a much looser construct and there were fewer consequences for ‘imprecision’.
In the workplace, the course participants will be expected to be punctual, complete documentation and forms on time, precisely account for their time and act in a range of other ways that are very different to what they are used to. The onus here is on the worker taking responsibility for his/her actions.

The challenge for the trainer in this is to work with them throughout this course to help the participants grasp:

- the reasons why things such as punctuality and accountability are important in the workplace;
- the necessity of their complying with these requirements;
- the fact that the requirements apply to everyone and they are not being singled out because of their ethnicity, religion or other defining characteristic;
- the consequences of not complying (which even include dismissal).

### iii. Conceptual Challenges

People who have lived here all their lives don’t necessarily realise it but Australian society and the Australian workplace are highly regulated. There are laws that cover a huge range of things from wearing seatbelts and bike helmets to how we behave in workplace. And the other thing that characterises Australian society and sets us aside from many other countries, is that these laws are enforced. Many countries might have a range of laws on their books, but at best people pay lip service to them ... like the drivers who only put on their seatbelts when they know there is a police checkpoint coming up.

In Topic 3 you will have a chance to go through some of the workplace laws (WHS, Anti-discrimination etc) with the participants ... but in this session the important thing to remember is that the whole notion of a regulated workplace environment may be totally foreign to the participants. In many cases, it will not have occurred to them that such laws could possibly exist, and then when they find out that they do, they will probably find them very strange and wonder why on earth they need to bother with them. But they do ... and this is a crucial learning from this unit.

### iv. Technical Challenges

Not only do we have a highly regulated workplace, we also have a highly technical workplace. Even though the bulk of the work in the settlement sector involves client interaction, there is an expectation that people at all levels perform some tasks using computers, mobile phones and other technological devices.

This unit only has time to touch lightly on information technology (IT) usage - in Topic 4 - so it is important that the following message be clearly and repeatedly delivered:

- IT competency is a crucial skill in the Australian workplace.
- If they do not feel comfortable about using mobile phones and do not have basic computer skills, it is important they take steps to remedy this.
- They should take responsibility when it comes to IT communication, i.e. they must keep their mobile phone on and charged when they are on call, they must check their emails regularly and respond if required, they must ensure they have a working computer ... and if there are problems with any of these, it is up to them to put in place some alternative arrangement.
v. Personal Challenges

Last but by no means least is the fact that the participants will have to learn new ways of relating to people when they begin work in the settlement sector. There are many dimensions in which this will occur, including but not limited to:

- accepting different management environments. One of the big issues for many male workers is having a female boss (which is highly probable given that according to ACOSS, almost 90% of those working in community services are women). There is also the issue of the informality in the workplace and the expectation that workers take a high degree of personal responsibility while at the same time being accountable. These concepts will be explored in more depth in Topic 4;

- learning to operate in a multicultural environment. The fact that participants are from another culture does not mean that they have effective cross cultural communication skills. First you will encounter the challenge of helping them realise that these are skills they need to have ... and then comes the process of teaching these skills. Topic 6 will explore this further;

- putting aside personal prejudices. Racism and prejudice are not western constructs. It is possible that participants will feel that certain groups within their own community are ‘below them’ or ‘less worthy than them’. Sometimes this is linked to race or religion but more often it is also linked to class. Topic 7 will explore this more but it is important you are aware of it throughout as prejudices or judgemental comments could well be apparent in discussions and class exercises and need to be addressed;

- understanding that being a worker means they cannot be a friend to a person while s/he is a client. The issue of professional boundaries is HUGE for bicultural workers and will be covered explicitly in Topic 8.

Recognising that the participants will come into this course with all these challenges ahead of them, it seems appropriate to begin by spending some time allowing them to reflect on where they are coming from and the challenges they expect to face working within the community sector in Australia. The focus of this session is therefore an exploration of:

- the similarities and differences to the working environment(s) they have previously experienced (in their homeland and/or in countries of first asylum);
- the challenges they have (or think they will have) working in the Australian workplace; and
- the challenges they have (or think they will have) working within their community.

Before moving on to this, however, there is another important point for you, as the trainer, to keep prominently in your mind as you teach this unit. You have an opportunity in the classroom to model the kind of interactions and behaviours that the participants will encounter in the workplace. These include but are by no means limited to:

- an expectation of punctuality;
- the informality of interpersonal exchanges;
- the importance of mutual respect;
- the way to interact with peers;
- acceptable ways of interacting with someone in a more senior role (in this case, you);
- the importance of asking questions;
- the value of socialising during breaks ... and the fact that in all likelihood you (the ‘boss’) will socialise with the participants;
- what constitutes suitable attire ...

You might wish to point this out at appropriate times as you work through the following topics to reinforce the point that what happens in the classroom is not just about learning facts but also
about learning how people interact and operate within the workplace. Also emphasise that in this context you are the ‘teacher’ but the way they interact with you will, in many ways, resemble the way they should interact with their manager or supervisor.

And last but not least, an important point about ‘you’ rather than ‘them’. In this unit there will be a lot of consideration about how the background of the participants shapes their world view and their interactions with others. You need to be aware that, like everyone else, you are the sum total of an array of values, attitudes and experiences that shape the way you view the world and your interactions with everyone you encounter. Whether you like it or not, these will affect the way you interact with the participants – separately and collectively. While trainers are trained to be aware of individual differences and the importance of treating all of their students with equal respect, if you are teaching this unit for the first time, it is probable that you will encounter some new challenges. Just as this unit expects participants to reflect on themselves and their behaviour towards others, if you can do this too – privately and introspectively – there is a good chance that you will benefit from the process and your ability to reach out to the participants will be enhanced.
Topic 1: Setting the Scene

TOPIC 1: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY

AIMS:
- to provide an overview of the unit and the assessment tasks associated with it;
- to allow participants to reflect on what they hope to gain from studying this unit;
- to enable the trainer to get an understanding of the background and expectations of the participants;
- to begin the process of exploring the Australian workplace from the perspective of someone for whom the culture is unfamiliar.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and introduction</td>
<td>To be determined by teacher</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the unit and the</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessment tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant reflection</td>
<td>Small group discussion followed by whole group activity</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An introduction to the Australian workplace</td>
<td>Trainer exploration</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant activity</td>
<td>Group activity and discussion</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a number of participant activities are provided which can be done in class, assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher as additional study.

NOTE TO TRAINERS: It is important to read the previous sections, especially the section about the participants, before you begin to plan how you will deliver the unit.

Introduction to the Unit

Before venturing into the unit material, there is value in talking to the participants about the course structure and the assessment tasks. As will be discussed below, it is unwise to assume that those taking this unit will be familiar with formal education in Australia so you might like to spell things out with greater specificity and in more detail than you would do if you were talking to other students. Issues that are particularly important to stress include:
- the necessity of regular attendance at class;
- the value of class participation;
- the need to allocate sufficient time to complete assessment tasks; and
- the importance of submitting assignments on time (noting mark deduction for late submission if this is the RTO policy).

**Participant Reflection**

The participants who will get the most from this unit will be those who are able to reflect on their own understanding of the world and how they operate within it, identify how and why these might need modification now that they are in Australia and then have the commitment to change their way of thinking and operating. Do not underestimate how big a challenge this is.

Because the first part of this ‘journey’ involves reflection on what each participant knows and expects, it is important to devote some time to facilitating an exploration of this before presenting new material. The following exercise will help you to do this and should also give you some valuable insights into the worlds of the participants. This in turn can be used to help you to focus the information you present and the activities you choose to best target them to meet the participants’ needs.

**Suggested Activity**

Divide the class into small groups and ask them to select from the following list of questions those they would like to discuss:

- Why do you want to be a bicultural worker with forced migrants?
- What do you see as the most important parts of the role of a bicultural worker?
- What are you most looking forward to when you become a bicultural worker?
- Is there anything you are feeling scared or anxious about?
- What do you think will be the biggest challenges for you in the Australian workplace?
- (If not already discussed) what do you think the most challenging things you will face when you are working in your own community?
- Do you have any idea about how you will overcome these challenges?
- What are the things you most want to learn from this course?

Bring them back together and encourage them to share their reflections. You might wish to record some of these on butchers’ paper or in some other way that you can refer to them in later sessions ... and you will also need this for final session.

**An Introduction to the Australian Workplace**

An important objective of this unit is to prepare people who have grown up in an entirely different part of the world to enter the Australian workplace – often for the first time. It would thus seem that a good place to begin is to look at the distinctive characteristics of 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’ –

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5 Depending on the group, you might like to give the participants time for personal reflection before opening the discussion.
which it is - for those accustomed to it – but not necessarily for people from elsewhere. The Australian workplace is a microcosm of Australian culture and as such, is built upon a framework of cultural norms. 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 very effective way to get to know colleagues and for them to get to know you. This in turn might lead to more productive working relationships. If on 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.

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.

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6 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
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 or irreverence. To someone not used to this, it could be seen as a sign of disrespect. It is also something quite nuanced ... you have to know when it is appropriate to do it and how far one can go. 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, annual leave, overtime, 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 for potential employees to ask to see a copy of the agency’s Personnel or Human Resources 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 ascertain 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 is 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 that a new worker ask whether this is the case and 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 laundered and not stained;
- you should take particular care with personal hygiene as this is considered very important. Australians dislike 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).

v. Punctuality

This might be at the end of this list but it is actually one of the most important issues for bicultural workers as it is one that many find hard to come to terms with.

Australians might like to think of themselves as pretty relaxed but in reality 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 often quite different to their own cultural norm and then they have spent a period of time (sometimes many years) in places where time was not regulated and was not given the same sense of importance accorded to it in Australia. There are three aspects of punctuality that many bicultural workers have to master:

- accepting that being on time really does matter;
- learning to organise themselves so that they can be on time;
- knowing how to take appropriate action (e.g. informing their manager) when they 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. In this session it is relevant to note that this is the case and that these laws will be explored in Topic 3.
Suggested Activity

Having explored some of the characteristics of the Australian workplace, it is useful to ask participants to reflect upon how these differ from their own experience and what adjustments they feel they must make in order to fit in. This exercise is intended to allow this reflection to take place.

Before coming to the lesson, write the following headings on separate sheets of butchers’ paper:

- Ways of Communicating
- Hierarchy and Leadership Styles
- Work Structure and Protocols
- Diversity
- Attire
- Punctuality.

Stick the sheets of butchers’ paper up around the room and ensure that there are lots of marker pens available.

Ask the participants to go to each of the sheets of paper and write their country of origin and then something about how things are in their country e.g.:

- IRAN: men kiss on the cheeks when greeting each other.
- SRI LANKA: you have to be very respectful to your boss and would never call him by his first name.
- BHUTAN: there is more official intervention in the workplace.
- AFGHANISTAN: women have little opportunity to participate in the workforce.

Discuss the responses.

Then ask the participants to reflect on:

- the importance of adopting Australian workplace culture;
- the things they think will be hardest to do;
- how they might be able to accomplish this;
- whether there are any parts of their own workplace culture that they would like to retain and/or that they think can enhance the Australian workplace.

An alternative activity would be to present some scenarios/case studies illustrating situations in which people did not fit in because they were not complying with Australian workplace norms and then ask participants to identify what was going wrong.
References

*Workplace Culture.* Victoria University.  
https://careers.vu.edu.au/Content/Students_and_Graduates/International_Students/Australian_Workplace_Culture.chpx

*Principles of Good Practice.* Institute of Public Administration Australia.  
http://qld.ipaa.org.au/content/docs/iQ_Resources/iQ_Research/PQGP/Values_and_Ethics_FULL_version.pdf


Participant 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

**TOPIC 2: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY**

**AIM:** to provide participants with a conceptual understanding of the role of government in Australia, in particular in relation to the delivery of services for refugees and forced migrants, and to assist them to overcome fears and suspicions they might have in relation to ‘government’.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The notion of ‘government’</td>
<td>Group activity and discussion</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government in the Australian context:</td>
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<td>• three tiers</td>
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<td>• federation</td>
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<td>• distribution of responsibility</td>
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<td>• separation of powers</td>
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<td>• the Australian Parliament</td>
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<td>• Commonwealth government departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Commonwealth funded settlement programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>~ Explanation, discussion and activity</td>
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<td>45 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>State and local governments</td>
<td>Explanation and activity</td>
<td>35 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peak advocacy agencies</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
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<td>Explanation of participant activities</td>
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<td>and reinforcement of messages in</td>
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<td>relation to assessment tasks</td>
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<td>~ Explanation</td>
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<td>In addition, a number of participant activities</td>
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<td>are provided which can be done in class,</td>
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<td>assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher</td>
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<td>as additional study.</td>
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**Introduction**

It is important that as a trainer, you understand the rationale for inclusion of this topic so that you can shape the information you present and be able to respond to participants’ comments.

As previously mentioned, many of the participants in this course will have come from a forced migration background. In addition to the characteristics already described, it is reasonable to
assume that they will have views about the role and activities of ‘government’ that have been shaped by their past experiences. These will of course vary from person to person but it is probable that you will find a range of views that include but are not limited to the notion that ‘government’ is synonymous with:

- **persecution** – where agents of the government are the people who have caused them and their loved ones so much pain and have been the cause for their flight;

- **interference** – where governments seek to dictate all aspects of a person’s life, denying freedoms and thwarting ambitions;

- **inefficiency** – especially where people come from countries where there are few government services and little infrastructure;

- **corruption** – where it is necessary to pay bribes in order to get anything done and where it is ‘who you know’ that counts.

**Suggested Activity**

Ask participants to write down three words that describe the way the government of their home country treated its citizens.

Invite (but do not force) participants to share the words that they have written.

Explain that the various governments (federal, state and local) of Australia are very different in many ways to those they have known. While there are significant variations of opinion about the way in which Australian governments do things and how efficient they are at doing them, it has to be acknowledged that by and large governments here act in the best interests of the people. It is important that you stress the need for them to recognise this fundamental difference. Further, they need to learn about the structures and operations of governments because as bicultural workers it is highly likely that they will be:

- working for government agencies or agencies funded by government;
- delivering services that have been designed by government and/or reflect government priorities;
- bound by government devised service principles;
- protected by government devised industrial law;
- required to work in accordance with a variety of workplace laws;
- referring clients to various government run/funded services;
- working in partnership with people employed by government.

**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.

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8 In this, and throughout the course, it is important to be mindful that many of the participants will have experienced highly traumatic events in the past. Great sensitivity must be displayed when asking people to share personal experiences, especially in instances such as this where the answer could have a direct link to their own, deeply painful memories of past experiences.
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 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.⁹

**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.¹⁰

**Separation of Powers**

Not only did the Constitution define which powers were to be vested in the Commonwealth and states, it also set up a framework of government designed to provide checks and balances and

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CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia

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.\(^\text{11}\)

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).

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. Each year, hundreds of people and organisations request and suggest new laws to answer problems they are facing. The Parliament passes around 160 bills each year.12

**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 departments13 with greatest relevance to anyone engaging in bicultural work are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Relevant Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Home Affairs14</td>
<td>Portfolio responsibilities include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Immigration, including but not only:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o identification and selection of offshore Humanitarian Program entrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o refugee status determination for onshore applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Australian Border Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• National Security and Cyber Security Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Criminal Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emergency Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Multicultural Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Translating and Interpreting Service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information see [www.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au)

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13 The names and mandates of the federal and state government departments were correct at the time of writing. These tend to change, however, so it would be wise to check in advance of teaching this unit to ensure currency.

14 The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) was established in December 2017, bringing together a number of previously separate government agencies. Of particular relevance to this course, it is responsible for functions formerly undertaken by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (visa issue) and the Department of Social Services (multicultural affairs), as well as for the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).
| Department of Human Services (DHS) | Responsible for various service agencies including:  
| | • **Medicare** which looks after the health of Australians through Medicare benefits, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register and the Australian Organ Donor Register  
| | • **Centrelink** which delivers a range of government payments and services to retirees, families, carers, parents, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, and people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds  
| | • **Child Support Agency** which supports separated parents to provide the financial and emotional support necessary for their children’s wellbeing  
| | • **CRS Australia** which helps people with disabilities find employment  
| | For more information see [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au) |
| Department of Social Services (DSS) | Areas of responsibility include:  
| | • Humanitarian Settlement  
| | • Communities  
| | • Families and Children  
| | • Housing and Homelessness  
| | • Mental Health  
| | • People with Disability  
| | • Seniors  
| | • Women  
| | For more information see [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au) |
| Department of Education and Training (DET) | Areas of responsibility include:  
| | • Early childhood education  
| | • School education  
| | • Higher education  
| | • Skills development  
| | • Youth  
| | • Employment  
| | For more information see [www.education.gov.au](http://www.education.gov.au) |
| Department of Jobs and Small Business (Department of Employment prior to December 2017) | Responsible for national policies and programmes that help Australians find and keep employment and work in safe, fair and productive workplaces  
| | For further information see [www.jobs.gov.au](http://www.jobs.gov.au) |
| Department of Health | Has a national focus on better health for all Australians, working in cooperation with state governments and other agencies  
| | In addition to its many functions, it provides funding for the various torture and trauma counselling services  
| | For further information see [www.health.gov.au](http://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 broad policy parameters are set by the funding body;
- funding is typically allocated through a grants or tender process;
- the mode 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 carefully monitor the use of funds 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 and it is important to note that people from forced migration backgrounds who enter under family and skilled migration programs have different eligibility entitlements.

<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)15</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised Intensive Services (SIS) – part of HSP</td>
<td>Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Services Program (SSP)</td>
<td>Language Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHM) Program</td>
<td>English as a Second Language Program (ESL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support Program</td>
<td>Specialist Torture and Trauma Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For further information see <a href="http://www.dss.gov.au">www.dss.gov.au</a></td>
<td>jobactive16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Topic 11 will examine the settlement programs in more detail.

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15 HSP replaced the Humanitarian Settlement Services and Complex Case Support Programs on 30 October 2017.
16 This is not a typographical error: jobactive is written with a lower case letter.
Suggested Activity

Spend some time reflecting with participants about how the system of government funding outlined above differs from that with which they are familiar. What are the implications of the differences? What will it mean for them as workers within the system?

State and Territory Governments

As previously mentioned, at the time of Federation, the states were keen to retain 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 the devolution of these services to 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, raise 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.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](http://www.gpnnt.org.au)

**Suggested Activity**

The purpose of the following discussion is, in part, to give you a sense of what the participants know about the support services available and about how they would go about solving problems. It is not intended that you go through each of the examples below to come up with a definitive solution ... how to do this will be explored in later units ... but rather that you think about the knowledge and skills demonstrated and tailor future instruction accordingly. You might also like to think about assigning homework tasks that target gaps in their knowledge.

Guide a discussion that focuses on how you would go about finding out about available services. You might want to throw in some 'hypotheticals' e.g. you have a client who:

- has been evicted from his home;
- is being beaten by her husband;
- has a disabled child;
- is suffering from a mental illness;
- is being threatened with legal action for not paying bills.

**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, immunization 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;

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17 Google the area of interest (eg 'education') plus your state (e.g. 'vic') plus 'gov.au' to find the relevant state government website.
- **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.

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**


## Participant 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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/domestic violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Possible Classroom Activity**

Depending on the amount of time you have available and the background and interests of the participants, you might wish to use the following either verbally or in writing. It is intended to emphasise that we interact with the three levels of government in many ways in our daily lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily activity</th>
<th>Which level of government is responsible?</th>
<th>Name of Agency?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You wake up in the morning and you turn on the radio to listen to the <strong>ABC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You need to make the children’s lunches but have run out of bread. You decide to drive to the supermarket. On the way you notice a big <strong>POTHOLE IN THE ROAD</strong> and decide to report it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On your way back from the supermarket you are asked to stop by the <strong>POLICE</strong> for a breath test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policeman notices that your <strong>CAR REGISTRATION</strong> is about to expire and reminds you to pay it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the time you get home you are now running late and decide to drive the children to <strong>SCHOOL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later that morning you have an appointment with a <strong>REFUGEE HEALTH NURSE</strong> ...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... at the local <strong>COMMUNITY CENTRE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterwards you stop at the <strong>POST OFFICE</strong> to purchase some stamps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you get home you find you have a letter from <strong>CENTRELINK</strong> ...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... reminding you to put in your <strong>TAX RETURN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You decide to do it later as you have to hurry to get to your part-time job as an administrator at the **UNIVERSITY**

You rush for the **BUS** and head off to work

When you arrive for work you notice people are tidying up the office because they have heard a **WORKPLACE SAFETY** inspector is on the way to see if the office is safe and tidy

When you get home you remember that you have to put the **GARBAGE BINS** on the nature strip for collection

Later that evening you receive a phone call from your sister telling you that she has just been granted a **VISA** come to Australia. You are very excited as you have not seen her for 5 years.
Topic 3: Laws Governing the Australian Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to workplace laws</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Work</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Health and Safety</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers compensation</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Discrimination</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality and sexual harassment</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child protection</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a number of participant activities are provided which can be done in class, assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher as additional study.

Introduction

The issues covered in this session are of course important for all workers in Australia but there are particular reasons why it is of additional importance for those targeted by this unit ... and why it is important that you approach it in full recognition of the perspective from which they come. Just to reiterate points made or alluded to earlier, it is likely that some course participants:
will have had little or no experience of the Australian workplace. If they are currently working as bicultural workers, this might be their first job in Australia. Some might have had jobs involving little formal training (eg shelf stacking). In any case, their chances of learning about workplace laws and conditions are likely to be negligible;

- come from countries where there is little or no regulation of the workplace. It might not even occur to them that such a thing would exist;

- might find the notion that the workplace is regulated quite strange ... or even threatening ... after all, many come from countries in which the ‘the government’ is synonymous with oppression (or worse);

- don’t necessarily equate the existence of laws with the requirement that they be obeyed. Another feature that distinguishes Australia from many of the countries of origin is that laws are taken seriously and there are enforcement mechanisms in place. In other parts of the world, there might be ‘laws’ – e.g. in relation to loading of vehicles – but as you can see from the photos below, not everyone pays attention to them.

The important messages to get across in this session are:

- there are a number of laws and regulations that govern the way things are done within Australians workplace;
- these are government requirements and are actively enforced;
- the main purpose of these laws and regulations is to protect workers, their clients/customers and the general public;
- the laws apply both to employers and employees;
- they have nothing to fear from these laws and regulations if they abide by them;
- there can be severe consequences for themselves and their employers (including being taken to court) if they do not follow these laws;  
- there are many ways in which they personally will benefit from them.

**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 cross 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.  

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18 While not wishing to scare participants unnecessarily, it is relevant to note that there is a litigious culture in Australia.
The **Fair Work Act** is a national legislative framework for workplace relations that 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)
- **Federal**: Safe Work Australia
- **State**: state bodies eg Workcover NSW.

The legal framework is further divided up into:

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• **Acts:** passed by parliament – legal rules that employers and employees must abide with;
• **Regulations:** supply detail for the implementation of the Act;
• **Codes of Practice:** documents that provide advice to employers about how to achieve minimum acceptable level of safety;
• **Standards:** technical standards for workplaces;
• Industry Specific **Standards** and **Guidance Notes**.

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 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 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 an Work Health and Safety Policy and to ensure that:

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

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

**Suggested Activity**

Work as a group to undertake an informal WHS audit of the room you are in:

• What are the potential risks? (e.g. power cords, obstacles in passageways etc)
• What could be done by those responsible for the building to mitigate these risks?
• What things could/should they (personally) do (e.g. ensure bags are not in the aisles, not rock on chairs)? …

Show the class the safety tags on appliances and explain their purpose and point out any safety signs (e.g. evacuation plans).

Follow up by asking:
- What they would do if they were walking down a corridor and saw a pool of water on the floor?
- How they would go about stacking boxes on top of a high cupboard?
- Whether smoking in the workplace is an WHS issue? Why?
- Whether it is OK to play a practical joke on a fellow worker and pull the chair away as he is about to sit down?
- Whether it is OK to tell someone that they are in trouble with the manager and that the manager wants to see them, when this is not the case?
- What they would do if the chair they had been given wobbled?
- What is the purpose of WHS signs in the workplace?
- To whom should they go if they have any concerns about safety in the workplace?
- Will they get in trouble if they raise WHS issues?

**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. It is therefore very important to report any workplace injuries.

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 a search engine to find the relevant agency for you.

**Privacy**

Privacy is an important principle for bicultural workers, as it is for all workers. In many ways they are like people living in small rural town in which everyone knows each other and within that community there are people who are keen to know other peoples’ business. As workers, however, they have obligations not to disclose any information about their clients to anyone other than those who have a legitimate right to know.

The agency for which they work is obliged by law to have a *Privacy Policy* and it is important that they familiarise themselves with this and abide by its provisions. 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.\(^{21}\)

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.\(^{22}\)

It is significant to note that, like WHS, there are international, national and state laws that protect people’s rights to privacy. Specifically they cover the collection, use and storage of information collected by agencies in their jurisdiction (including those funded by them). Further, there is an additional level of protection built up around ‘sensitive information’ such as health records.


Before leaving this topic there is value in stressing that while Privacy Laws are primarily directed at protecting the privacy of clients/patients, as workers they have an ethical obligation to respect the privacy of their colleagues and to be extremely careful about what they say about them … both inside and outside the workplace.

**Suggested Activity**

Before the class, have a word to two of the more outgoing and confident participants. Explain that you are going to ask them to role play a scenario in which they are old friends meeting over coffee. J is a bicultural worker at the local migrant resource centre and K is a member of the same small and emerging community as J.

K opens the conversation by saying that s/he has heard that Sam (another member of their community), is ‘in lots of trouble’ and asks J what is going on. J should initially be a bit reluctant to divulge anything but K should try hard to get J to open up, possibly using lines such as:

• “We are such old friends, you know you can tell me.”
• “Don’t you trust me?”
• “I’m just wanting to help this person but I just don’t know the facts.”
• “You know I’d never tell anyone else.”

J says that it would be wrong to say anything because Sam is a client but s/he eventually relents, telling K all about how Sam has been beating his wife and how the police have been called and … and all the time K urges J to tell more.

When there is a good time to draw things to a halt, thank J and K for their help and then pose the questions along the following lines to the class:

• Was J right to share the information about Sam?
• (If the answer was ‘no’) but isn’t it OK because K is a good friend and promised not to tell?
• Why should J not have told K?

\(^{21}\) If a client believes that their privacy has been breached, they have a right to take legal action against the worker and the organisation.

• What are the possible consequences of J sharing this information?

Then brainstorm with the class a variety of things J could have said to avoid straining his/her relationship with K while at the same time, respecting the client's privacy.

**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 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\(^\text{23}\) 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:\(^\text{24}\)

• Age Discrimination Act 2004
• Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
• Disability Discrimination Act 1992
• Racial Discrimination Act 1975
• Sex Discrimination Act 1984.

The more recently introduced [Fair Work Act 2009](http://www.fairwork.gov.au) 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:

- race
- gender
- age
- marital status
- colour
- sexual preference
- physical or mental disability
- family or carer’s responsibilities

\(^{23}\) The Australian Human Rights Commission is the national agency with responsibility for EEO. Use Google to find the relevant state agency.

\(^{24}\) [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)
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The following attributes are examples of adverse action when taken because of any of the attributes listed above:

- 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).

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.

Suggested Activity

There are some good case studies on the Fair Work website that you might wish to use in class. See: www.fairwork.gov.au/Disputes-and-complaints/Pages/Discriminated-against.aspx?role=employees#what%20is%20discrimination?

Gender Equality and Sexual Harassment

Depending on the background of the participants in your class, you might wish to also touch upon Australian laws with respect to gender equality and sexual harassment.

Australia is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and has a national Sex Discrimination Act 1984. 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 bicultural workers include the following:

- It is possible (even probable if they are in the community sector) that they will have a female boss. They 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.

25 From www.fairwork.gov.au
Sexual harassment can include:

- 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.\(^{26}\)

Equally important in this context is stressing that in Australia there are also laws\(^{27}\) that protect people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex (GLBTI people). Some participants will come from countries that are far less tolerant of homosexuality or other variants of gender identity and might feel confronted by people who openly express themselves according to this identity. They need to recognise that 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 they themselves are GLBTI, it is important for them to know that they have rights. If they are on the receiving end of comments, abuse or mistreatment, they 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](http://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 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 the children. It is important to convey the fact that being asked to undergo a WWCC does not mean that the 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 ‘point in time’ background checks on prospective employees. Other places (Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory) offer certification to engage in child-related work to individuals which is valid for a period of time.

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\(^{27}\) Including the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986.
This means that workers do not have to get recertified if they move to a new job 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**\(^{28}\) 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;\(^{29}\)
- 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, and the publicity associated with its introduction, has been found to increase public awareness of child abuse, both within mandated professional groups and within the community at large.

**Mandatory reporting laws** define the types of situations that **must** be reported to statutory child protection services. All jurisdictions possess mandatory reporting requirements of some description, however, the people mandated to report and the types of abuse for which it is

\(^{28}\) The issue of ‘hitting’ is hugely complicated. The law says ‘one must not hit’ but it would be extremely rare to come across a parent who has not smacked their child at some point in time. Be aware of the confusion and disagreement about this issue in the general public and stress that the law is intended to protect children from harm.

\(^{29}\) 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 a parent to be charged with neglect. As children get older, the question has to be asked, are they 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.
mandatory to 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 jurisdictions (Australian Capital Territory, South Australia, and Tasmania) have more extensive lists or use generic descriptions such as ‘professionals working with children’.

In addition to state and territory law, there are provisions within Commonwealth legislation that relate to mandatory reporting. Under the Family Law Act 1975 (Cth), personnel from the Family Court of Australia, the Federal Magistrates Court and the Family Court of Western Australia also have mandatory reporting obligations. This includes registrars, family counsellors, family dispute resolution practitioners or arbitrators, and lawyers independently representing children’s interests.

There are penalties for failing to make a report.

**Suggested Activity**


**Resources**


**Participant 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 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?
# Topic 4: Understanding the Australian Workplace

## TOPIC 4: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY

**AIM:** to build participants’ understanding of and capacity to comply with a number of relevant Employability Skills and to their understanding of the differences between these and the way(s) they have been used to working.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management processes</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Imported PowerPoint presentation</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and organising</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective use of technology</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a number of participant activities are provided which can be done in class, assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher as additional study.

## Introduction

Whereas Topic 3 looked at the laws that regulate the Australian workplace, this session is intended to provide even more insight into its ‘customs’ – i.e. the way things operate and the way people relate to each other. When you grow up in a country, you learn most of these things by osmosis … or you will have at least heard mention of them even if you don’t know much about them … but when you haven’t had this background, there is much to learn.

The significance of being able to operate within the Australian workplace culture should not be underestimated. In the ’About the Topic Notes’ section, you will have read about Employability Skills. These are the core skills employers expect employees to have, over and above the skills that relate specifically to the job. They are relevant in every workplace … and without them it will be hard to either find or retain employment. Of all the topics in this unit, this is the one that has the strongest focus on identified Employability Skills, so it is a very important one for the participants.
By now you should be well on the way to learning about the participants in your class. You should have found out where they come from and how long they have been in Australia. You might also know a little of their previous employment history. It is possible that this will be very mixed. You might have some people in the class who have had senior positions in their country of origin whereas others might have never worked for wages ... and there will be people whose experiences fall between these two extremes. Similarly, by now you should have some sense of the size of the adjustment they will have to make to fit into an Australian workplace.

You should use this knowledge when planning this session so that what you present and the way you present it will best target the needs of the participants. The following notes and activities are presented as suggestions and you should not feel obliged to follow them if you feel that there are better ways to prepare those in your class to operate competently and comfortably within the culture of an Australian workplace.

Irrespective of how you handle this session, it would be good to begin by explaining that this is the next step in building their understanding of the Australian workplace and that it builds on the work you have done together in previous sessions, in particular in the first session where you talked about workplace culture, and those parts of Topic 3 when you focused on workplace interaction (especially between men and women. You might also wish to do a recap of some of this, in particular things pertaining to workplace culture.

Another relevant point to stress is that when we talk about ‘the Australian workplace’ we are making sweeping generalisations. Every workplace will have its own characteristics. Within each industry there are likely to be similarities but when you compare industries (e.g. a construction site and a migrant resource centre) it is probable that the cultures will be very different. Participants should thus be informed that:

- this section focuses on the workplace within the settlement sector;
- if they have worked in other sectors, there could well be things in the settlement sector that are quite different to that which they have known.

**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 that in many parts of the world and new workers have to come to terms with a wide variety of procedures that they might perceive as being annoying, a waste of time, an interference, disrespectful, suggesting that they are not trusted .... Your challenge in this section is to both explain the following concepts and ‘normalise’ them, so that the participants see them as a routine part of working life.

**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 to explaining the function and purpose of timesheets, it is important to stress that:

- 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 for people who have had little experience working on a computer. The key issues to stress to those confronting electronic lodgement are:

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

As in many things, it is important that the worker takes responsibility for his/her 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. You might wish to take to class some of the forms that you, as a trainer, have to deal with (eg applications for leave, requests for reimbursement, accident report forms etc). Stress to the participants that:

- there are many forms used in every workplace;
- it is their 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 they are unsure about which form to use or how to fill it in, they need to ask (and that asking will not get them into trouble or be seen as ignorance).

**Meetings**

Like forms, meetings are commonplace in the workplace. 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 workplace meetings 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).

The best advice to give to someone who is not familiar with workplace meetings is to listen carefully and watch how other people behave. Follow their example. If there are things they are not sure about, they should ask. As previously implied, asking will most likely be viewed as the new staff member taking initiative rather than a sign of their ignorance or unsuitability for their new role.

**Training**

Increasingly emphasis is being placed on ‘professional development’ – in other words, building the skills of people within the workplace. A competent manager will work with those in his/her team to identify training needs and opportunities.
The following are some important messages to get across to participants:

- 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 supervisor 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 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**

Effective workplace communication is fundamental to an efficient, cohesive and cooperative workplace.

The Office of Volunteers in South Australia has produced a useful PowerPoint presentation that covers the basics of effective communication. You might wish to download and use this in class:


The issues covered in this presentation include:

- verbal and non-verbal communication;
- effective communication skills;
- barriers to effective communication;
- listening skills;
- individual differences;
- cultural aspects of communication;
- constraints on communication (privacy laws, codes of ethics etc).

**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 are more efficiently done 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:

- put their egos to one side,
- listen carefully and reflectively to other people’s ideas,
- ensure that the best interests of the client (or the project) are at the centre of every decision made and action taken.

**Suggested Activity**

Hand copies of the following self-assessment quiz to the participants. Ask them to place a tick in the column that best describes their life.

When they have completed the table, get the participants to score each ‘always’ as 2 points, ‘sometimes’ as 1 point and ‘never’ answer as 0 points.

Ask them to add up their points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You divide the household chores at home and get everyone to do their share</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You ask for help from others when you need it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You pass on messages to other people quickly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organise friends to do something for a celebration (e.g. bring food, provide entertainment, make a speech)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You try to help other people when they are busy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You play a team sport that you really enjoy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You prefer working on projects as part of a group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask the participants to put up their hand if they have scored 10 points or more. Congratulate them for being ‘good team players’.

Don’t ask those who scored less than 5 to put up their hands. This could be embarrassing for them and might be seen as a ‘loss of face’. Instead say that anyone who had a lower score (5 or less) should think hard about how they can develop their skills.

In addition, ask the class to:

- share the things they have learnt about effective teamwork;
- reflect on whether there are any differences between teamwork in Australia and the way people work together in their country of origin (or in the refugee camp in which they lived).

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This is a brief statement but a complicated concept that is worth unpacking with the participants. Clearly you want people to express ideas and be active participants in any group activity but you don’t want them to be so dogmatic and overbearing that they stifle other people’s capacity to do this as well. Essentially it is about sensitivity to others and openness to alternative ideas.
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 key Employability Skills. For some participants, however, they do not come easily ... after all, if you have spent years of your life in a place where everything is decided for you and there is no point in planning because you have no idea what the future might hold, you don't get much chance to build these skills. Then if you add cultural factors, such as different views of time on top of all of this, it is easy to see how some newly arrived refugees find the self discipline expected in the Australian workplace very daunting.

But this is really what it all boils down to – **self discipline**. There is an expectation in the workplace that a worker will take responsibility for him/herself. Before considering some simple tips to help enhance planning and organisational skills, why not try the following exercise.

**Suggested Activity**

As before, hand out copies of the following table and ask participants to mark which applies to them. Take care to stress that this is not a 'test' and that nobody will be recording their marks. Rather it is a self assessment tool – something that can help them find out whether there are skills they need to learn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You use a calendar or diary to keep track of what you have to do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are usually early or on time for your appointments, classes and meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can find something you need quickly (e.g. class notes, a bill, the right shoes for an outfit)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can read and follow a bus or train timetable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can find how to get somewhere by using a street directory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have a filing system at home for your important documents (paper and/or computer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You take care with your personal presentation e.g. ironed clothes, fresh breath, clean fingernails, etc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You get enough sleep most of the time so you have energy for the day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You try to eat healthy food and exercise regularly to maintain your fitness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ask the participants to score the table as before: 2 points for 'always', 1 point for 'sometimes' and 0 points for 'never'; then ask them to raise their hand if they scored:

- More than 15;
- 10 – 15;
- Less than 10.

Then ask:

- those with higher scores to share some of the things they do to help them be organised;
- those with lower scores to share some of the things that make it difficult for them to be organised … and whether there are things that they think could help them (short of sending their children to boarding school).

You might feel that the activity has drawn out sufficient useful hints but if it did not, you might wish to share the following planning and organisational tips with the participants:

- Because mobile phones are so important for bicultural workers, make sure that when you walk in the door in the evening, you plug it into the charger.
- Check your mobile phone is on first thing in the morning.
- Check your mobile phone regularly for messages.
- 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 accomplish. Tick things off as you go (this provides a remarkable sense of accomplishment).
- 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 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 in advance 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.

And finally – the most important message of all: the only person who can do this is themselves. They must take responsibility for being organised. If they don’t, they will not be seen as good workers.

Problem Solving

Given the background of the participants (as forced migrants themselves) there is a reasonable expectation that they will have highly tuned problem solving skills. The challenge they face is to adapt these skills to their new environment (Australia) and to an unfamiliar workplace.

If you look into it, you will discover that ‘problem solving’ is a discipline in which theories abound and various practitioners and academics argue that they have the developed the perfect ‘model’. One article alone32 explores over 50 different problem solving techniques. The difficulty with this is that it can make it seem far too complicated for the task at hand. Instead it is far better to try to break things down into simple practical steps.

Noting that every problem is of course 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?

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In addition, it is important to convey the concept that asking for help to solve a problem is not a sign of weakness. Each worker will have someone supervising them in the workplace. If they confront something they are not sure about, they should ask for help. It is far better to do this than to do something that will disadvantage clients. There are various ways of asking for help in such circumstances, for example as a worker 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?

Workers should look at every occasion that they need to ask for help as a learning opportunity. They should reflect upon 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 their head, in a notebook or in a file) for use the next time they encounter a similar problem.

**Effective Use of Technology**

One of the things many new workers in the settlement sector find challenging is the reliance on technology in the workplace. This is especially the case if they have had limited exposure to this in the past.

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 points that should be stressed:

If someone is not familiar with the use of these devices, it is necessary that they learn. The thing for you to emphasise is that they have to be honest with themselves and their employer about what they know and do not know and that it is their responsibility to look for opportunities to improve their skills.

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

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

Stress the importance of replying to emails and also acknowledging receipt of emails that contain information they need to know (e.g. from their manager, another worker or their client).

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33 The use of computer applications in the settlement sector is covered in Topic 9 of CHCSW401A: Work Effectively with Forced Migrants. If you are not familiar with this unit, it would be good to look at this section.
Make sure they ask for help if they come across something they 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 well make others annoyed or angry.

One thing that you can do to assist with this is to collect information about courses in the local area in which they can enrol and also think about other learning opportunities (e.g. by seeking the assistance of a college librarian or the administration staff in your agency).

**Resources**


**Participant 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 **Romania**, 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. 

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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.

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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 classmates, 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>Teamwork</td>
<td>Apply teamwork in a range of situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</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>
<tr>
<td>Planning and organising</td>
<td>Manage time and priorities to complete work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify and obtain appropriate equipment and permits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify potential hazards and prepare appropriate responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-management</td>
<td>Take responsibility for planning and organising own work priorities and completing assigned tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitor own performance to ensure work is completed on time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Use technology to monitor and report on work progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use communications technology appropriate to the workplace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Topic 5: Operating within the Australian Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC 5: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AIMS:</strong> To enable participants to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understand the concept of organisational culture and its relevance to them as a worker;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• develop and implement a workplan;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• identify factors affecting the achievement of work objectives, establish contingencies and incorporate these into workplans;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• identify professional networks and use these to build relationships, skills and knowledge;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• identify professional development opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational culture</td>
<td>Presentation and two activities</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplans</td>
<td>Presentation and two activities</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional networks</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a number of participant activities are provided which can be done in class, assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher as additional study.

Organisational Culture

Every organisation, whether it is a small community centre or a large multinational company, has its own ‘culture’. Very simplistically this encompasses:

- 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 AND understanding how the agency expects its staff to reflect its culture in the work that they do, and making sure you do this yourself.
Suggested Activity

This exercise can be done as a whole class brainstorming activity or in groups (with each group given one or two organisations to discuss).

As an introduction to the notion of organisational culture, explain the basics of this as described above and then ask participants to suggest what they think the philosophy and objectives of the following organisations might be:

- Rolls Royce
- Australian Red Cross
- Target
- Centrelink
- Volunteer Bushfire Brigade
- McDonalds
- Cancer Council
- Telstra
- Greenpeace
- National Australia Bank

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 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.
Suggested Activity

Select one of the benevolent not-for profit agencies in the previous activity and brainstorm with the participants what the vision, mission and values of this agency might be. If possible, compare your version to the published statements.

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.

Strategic Plans

Whereas the vision, mission and values statements are typically 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 articulates:

- 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).

Because an organisation’s goal is often broad and intended to be achieved over a long(ish) period of time, it is typically broken down into a number of smaller objectives. Objectives are a number of concise and clear statements of what is to be done to achieve a larger goal and help define how those goals will be reached. A simple rule to follow is that objectives should be:

SMART:

S – Specific
M – Measurable
A – Achievable
R – Relevant
T – Timed.

34 From ASC Website: www.asylumseekerscentre.org.au.
35 ‘SMART’ has been widely used for setting objectives for the last 30 years.
Relevance?

At this point some participants might be wondering why they need to know about the issues discussed above. The philosophy of an organisation is in place before they 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 they understand these concepts:

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

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

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

Another reason why understanding the basics of organisational philosophy and planning is important is that many of the participants will be actively involved within their own community, possibly in the establishment and management of a community organisations. The principles outlined above are as relevant to this as they are to the agency for which they might or intend to work.

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 a worker has to develop and/or work to a workplan will depend very much on the job they are employed to do. For some workers, for example those employed to deliver projects

**EXAMPLE OF GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

The following shows the relationship between goals and objectives:

**GOAL:**  
To address antisocial behaviour by providing greater recreational opportunities for African youth in Moorooka by facilitating better links between the young people and sporting clubs.

**OBJECTIVES:**  
To increase by 25% the number of young Africans playing in local soccer teams by the end of the calendar year.

To secure sufficient sponsorship funding by 30 June to pay registration fees for 10 young Africans to participate in soccer training camps.
funded by DSS’s Settlement Services Program, it is a requirement of the position. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Expected Outcomes</th>
<th>Resources Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 more manageable if they are broken down into smaller parts and then you need to 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:
### Strategy

<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, brackets and other requirements purchased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build shelves</td>
<td>Hammer, saw, tape measure, purchased items</td>
<td>New set of shelves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And don’t forget you can also use some of your problem solving skills (as discussed in Topic 4) to help you out.

**Suggested Activity**

Prepare handouts for the class that have an uncompleted version of the table as shown above.

Think of a familiar task such as preparing breakfast for the family, shopping at a supermarket, going to the doctor … and ask participants to break this task into its component parts and fill in a workplan to show how it can be undertaken.

**‘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 to accomplish. This is where ‘to do’ lists can really help. This is simply a list of things you want to accomplish 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**

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

Even the most cleverly constructed workplans are not immune from *Murphy’s Law*. There will always be something that gets in the way of being able to achieve your objectives in the way you intended. The challenge is to:

- recognise early enough that things are going wrong to be able to fix things before they go beyond the point of no return;
- be creative enough to think of a way of achieving your objectives 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; ...

**Suggested Activity**

Either brainstorm as a class or divide the class into groups to consider how they would deal with one or more of the ‘smaller’ obstacles outlined above.

The important points to stress are:

- don’t panic;
- don’t pretend that the problem will go away or ignore it;
- think of alternatives;
- weigh up the merit of each;
- seek advice or help if necessary;
- decide on the course of action that seems best;
- act.

**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 data base of contacts in relevant parts of the sector;
- explain how to go about doing this;
- show participants how to organise this information so it is readily accessible.

Let’s begin with the question of why networks are important.

**Suggested Activity**

Brainstorm the following questions with the class:
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 run down 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.

Also 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:

1. **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.

**Suggested Activity**

Divide the class into small groups. Ask the participants to reflect within the group about their own training needs (in addition to this course) and about what the best way to meet these needs might be.

Some might wish to share their reflections but this should not be seen to be obligatory, though it is important to leave time for participants to ask questions and seek information about where they might be able to find out about training opportunities.

**Reference**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maker</th>
<th>Organisational Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rolls Royce</td>
<td>To produce the most powerful and best handling cars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyundai</td>
<td>To produce safe cars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volvo</td>
<td>To produce the most luxurious cars in the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferrari</td>
<td>To produce cheap, efficient reliable cars.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your turn:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maker</th>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To produce cheap, efficient reliable cars.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
   Brotherhood of St Laurence.

4. Develop an informal workplan for one of the following tasks:
   - Buying a new car.
   - Taking a camping holiday.
   - Arranging a birthday party.
Topic 6: The Bicultural Worker in the Australian Workplace

**TOPIC 6: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY**

**AIMS:** To enable participants to:

- recognise the benefits and challenges of being a person from a culturally and linguistically diverse background in the Australian workplace;
- develop a greater appreciation of their own role and responsibilities within the workplace;
- make effective use of cross cultural communication skills;
- understand the use of grievance procedures and conflict resolution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being a bicultural worker from a CALD background</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role and responsibilities in the Workplace</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross cultural communication</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolution and grievance procedures</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a number of participant activities are provided which can be done in class, assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher as additional study.

**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.

**Suggested Activity**

Brainstorm with the class the advantages to an agency delivering settlement services of employing people from CALD backgrounds.

The sort of answers you should be looking for include (but are by no means limited to):

- clients can speak to them in their own language;
- clients feel more comfortable with someone from their own background;
- workers have an understanding of the background of the clients;
- workers are better able to assess clients’ needs;
- it is easier to build a relationship of trust between worker and client ...

This being said, it is important for a worker employed because of their bicultural skills to be aware of the fact that things are not quite as simple or as uniformly positive as the above list might suggest. The reality is that bicultural workers face many challenges working in the settlement sector and it is important that they are aware of these.

It is thus recommended that you spend some time discussing the challenges listed below with participants, stressing throughout that failure to recognise such issues will invariably have a negative impact on the communication between the worker and the client ... and consequently on the quality of the service and the entrants’ settlement outcomes.

i. **Use of Language Skills**

A simple one to start with. It is necessary that bicultural workers recognise that they are not interpreters (unless they have undergone training and are specifically engaged as such) and that
it is important that they 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 them to act as an interpreter might, amongst other things, require them to undertake work outside their job description and might place them in a situation of potential conflict of interest.

While agencies have slightly different policies in relation to the boundaries between the role of a bicultural worker and an interpreter, the following principles often apply:

- It is appropriate to use their language skills when they are talking directly to their client.
- It is OK for them to help out for simple interpretation – such as organising an appointment for their client with another agency or relaying information.
- It is NOT advisable to agree to interpret when another worker (in their own agency or elsewhere) wants to hold a substantive discussion with their client. In this case they should explain that this is not appropriate and encourage the other worker to engage the services of a qualified and accredited interpreter, e.g. from the Translating and Interpreting Service. It is noted, however, that in some circumstances (in particular when it is not possible to secure the services of an interpreter in a minority language), that the bicultural worker will need to interpret for their 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.

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 points to stress here are:

- bicultural workers should be sensitive to occasions where the gender of the worker is significant;
- bicultural workers have an important role to play in helping their agency understand when such issues are relevant to a particular client;
- it is in no way an indictment of a worker to say to their manager that they have concerns about their suitability 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 the worker think of ways to help the client overcome any misgivings they might have about interacting with them.
iii. **Ethnicity, Tribal Affiliation and Religion**

Just because a person comes from the same country as a client does not mean that they are 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.

The relevant thing to avoid is assigning someone associated with the persecutors in the home country (as in the cases listed above) or with a group to whom the entrant’s group felt animosity to be involved in the delivery of initial settlement support. This would traumatisate new entrants and greatly impair any prospects for building a relationship of trust between worker and client.

Once again you should stress that there is no shame in a worker expressing concerns to his/her manager about the match to the client and talking about the possibility of assigning another worker ... as long as the reasons why this would be better for the client are clearly spelt out.

iv. **Racism**

There is no universally accepted definition of racism, however the Australian Human Rights Commission\(^\text{36}\) 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. The sad reality is that racism exists within every culture ... it just manifests in different ways and is directed at different groups of people.

In the current discussion, racism should be distinguished from the discussion about ethnicity above. Here we are not talking about groups where distrust and animosity are playing out in their own country. Rather, we are talking about the prejudice that many people feel towards people of another race, often one with whom they have had little or no association.

In this regard, service providers face something of a dilemma. On the one hand, they have an obligation to educate new entrants to the fact that in Australia everyone should be treated with respect, irrespective of the colour of their skin, their religion or any other defining characteristic. On the other hand, it takes new entrants time to assimilate this principle and as the most important objective for service providers is to assist the entrant to settle, pairing an entrant with someone they instinctively will not respect is not necessarily going to help.

It this context it is important to stress that if a worker has a client from a background different to their own (but possibly shares a language):

- they need to be aware that some entrants will not feel comfortable working with them;
• this is not a reflection on them personally ... or on their competence as a worker;
• they have a responsibility to bring this ‘mismatch’ to the attention of their manager and discuss other options.

When considering the issue of racism it is relevant to consider the fact that the worker might also harbour negative views about a particular entrant group. It is a fact of life that every single one of us holds views about other groups. Sometimes we are aware of these and can articulate them but more often than not they are buried just below the surface of the conscious mind. They are attitudes we have absorbed – often without us being aware of it - from friends and family, from the media or from any one of a number of other sources, and they will affect the way we interact with others. Dealing with something we don’t know about is a hard ask, but it is important to sow the seed that this might be an issue upon which workers should take some time to reflect.

v. Class

Many 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 compatriots who they perceive will be ‘looking down on them’. Conversely, there could be times when the entrant comes from a high status background and is not comfortable dealing with a worker who is perceived to be ‘beneath them’. In such cases, selecting a worker from an entirely different background might work better if the entrant either feels intimidated by the worker or is unlikely to be able to accept that the worker is in a position to assist them.

NOTE: There will be an opportunity for participants to reflect in detail on how these issues are relevant for them personally (as opposed to bicultural workers generally) in Topic 7.

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 and in this context the Code of Ethics of Brisbane’s Multicultural Development Agency (MDA)\(^\text{37}\) is included below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDA Code of Ethics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have the knowledge and skills required to comply with the required standards of conduct and behaviour of their professional organisation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDA Code of Ethics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDA Code of Ethics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use appropriate language and refrain from inappropriate physical contact with other staff, volunteers and/or clients, including children and young people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDA Code of Ethics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge their position of influence and trust as a bicultural worker and do not exploit clients.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^{37}\) [http://www.mdainc.org.au/?page_id=42](http://www.mdainc.org.au/?page_id=42)
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.

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 relevant to note that some agencies will call this a **Code of Conduct** rather than a Code of Ethics. Essentially they are the same thing.

**Suggested Activity**

Refer to the provisions contained in the MDA Code of Ethics with participants.

If the participants have not yet entered the workforce, emphasise that it is possible they will be required to sign a document such as this when they do. Ask them how they will feel about this and what it will mean for the way they conduct themselves.

If you have participants in the class who are already working, ask them whether they were required to sign a Code of Ethics. If they were, ask them what they remember of what it contained. Was it similar to the MDA Code of Ethics? Has it helped them to understand what is expected of them in the workplace?

**Cross Cultural Communication**

There are two common misconceptions when it comes to cross cultural communication and bicultural workers:

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

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

Both are false assumptions.
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 they might begin with a bit of an advantage – they can compare and contrast the way they are used to communicating with the way people in Australia communicate – but it does not mean that they know how to communicate with people from other cultures, and it does not necessarily mean that they 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 they will spend much of their work time relating to people from their own background, but they will also have to interact with their manager and with other staff from within their workplace and other service providers. These people are likely to be from a diverse array of backgrounds and they 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 and it is important that you help the participants to recognise this.

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**: apologising when you feel you have made a mistake or do not know what is the polite thing to do is important. 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 what ever 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 it is all about you, 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’.  

www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au/Employers/Managing_staff/Grievance_procedures
Examples of grievances are:

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

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 and/or the Australian Human Rights Commission.  

### Resources

*Managing Cross Cultural Conflict Productively.*


Research Unit for Multilingualism and Cross Cultural Communication. University of Melbourne.  
[www.rumaccc.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.rumaccc.unimelb.edu.au)

### Participant 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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39 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**

### TOPIC 7: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY

**AIMS:** to enable participants to explore how their ethnicity, class, gender, age and religion might have an impact on their relationship with their clients and to identify strategies that will enable them to manage this in the workplace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding ourselves</td>
<td>Activity and discussion</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How others view us</td>
<td>Activity and discussion</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why this is relevant</td>
<td>Activity and discussion</td>
<td>45 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace supervision</td>
<td>Concluding statement</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a number of participant activities are provided which can be done in class, assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher as additional study.

**Note for the Trainer**

This is one of the most important topics in this unit ... and possibly the most challenging for you as a trainer and for the participants. The reason it comes half way through the course is that it requires a level of trust to have been built up between you and the participants, and between the participants themselves, so that there can be some honest self reflection.

And that’s what this session is all about: self reflection. It’s about exploring who we are, how others perceive us and how this is relevant for our work.

Please think carefully about this session beforehand. If you feel the group you are currently working with is not really ‘gelling’ well, you might like to move this topic back a bit and wait until later in the course. That way, with a little more time and a few more group exercises, the level of collective trust might have increased to the point where everyone will be able to get the most out of this session.

Before tackling this topic you might also find it valuable to look at Topic 12 of CHCSET001: Work Effectively with Forced Migrants. This covers some of the same issues as will be covered here but in a more general way, given the greater diversity of participants in this course.
NOTE: You will need to take a stack of blank paper (and possibly some pens or pencils) to this session.

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.

Suggested Activity

Explain to participants that this is an exercise about identity. It requires us to be honest with ourselves but it does not require us to share everything with others. While there will be an opportunity to share, this will be volunteers only … and even then, those who do share can choose to hold things back.

Ask participants to draw a picture of themselves on a piece of paper.

Explain that you would like them to write down the characteristics that define themselves surrounding their picture. You might like to show how this is done by drawing yourself on the board and beginning to fill in your own ‘identity map’.

Once the participants have had time to do this, ask them to select and highlight the 5 characteristics that they see as the most important in terms of defining who they are. Again, leave time for people to reflect on this.

From here on, how you develop this exercise should be determined by the ‘personality’ of the group. You might wish to:

- ask whether anyone wants to share their identity map (or elements thereof);
- explore who has chosen certain things as being most important to them (e.g. who sees their religion, or ethnicity or gender as being particularly significant to how they see themselves); …

How Others View Us

Having spent some time thinking about who we are, it is time to move onto exploring how others view us. Please note that the following activity, even more so than others, is offered as a suggestion only. It is dependent on the dynamics within the group and if you feel that there is insufficient trust or respect to carry it off, you might wish to substitute another activity or address this issue in a more didactic manner.

Suggested Activity

Using a separate piece of paper, ask the participants to once again draw a picture of themselves. This time they should write down how they think others see them i.e. what they think the characteristics are that are the most apparent and important to other
people (suggest writing down 5 – 10 things). Once they have done this, get them to fold the piece of paper and leave it on their desk.

The next task is to divide the class into pairs (with a group of three if you have an uneven number). Depending on the dynamics within the class you might wish to suggest that people pair with someone they don’t know much about or with someone they know well. Ensure each person has a blank piece of paper.

Ask the class members to put the name of the person with whom they have been paired in the middle of their paper and then to write down the things they believe best define that person. Again suggest writing down 5 – 10 things and stress that when doing this, they should be mindful of the other person’s feelings.

When they have done this, ask them to hand the paper to the person they have described. Ask each person to then privately compare their own list with that given to them.

You then might wish to ask participants to put up their hands if:

- the lists were very similar;
- the lists were very different;
- they agreed with everything on the other list;
- there was anything on the other list that surprised them;
- there was anything on the other list they disagreed with.

Ask whether anyone would like to share some thoughts about how the lists compared but don’t compel anyone to do so.

Depending on how the exercise unfolded, you might want to reflect upon:

- the very positive level of mutual understanding that has been built up in the class;
- or
- **the fact that the way we view ourselves is sometimes quite different to the way others view us.**

The latter is probably the more likely outcome and is also the important lesson to be drawn from this session.

**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.

**Discuss** with the class why it is necessary that settlement workers think about and care about how their clients perceive them. The kinds of answers you should be looking for include:

- the best interests of the clients should be at the centre of their thinking;
- their clients need to be able to feel comfortable with them;
- their clients need to be able to trust them;
- their clients have had experiences (often in the recent past) that affect the way they perceive people from particular backgrounds and/or who present with certain characteristics; …

It is also relevant to stress that:
the fact that they (the participants) had nothing to do with the bad things that happened to their clients will not necessarily stop their clients being wary of them;

they need to accept that there will be times when it is necessary for them to recognise that they are not the best person to work with a particular client or group of clients;

if this happens, it has nothing to do with their ability as a worker – in fact, if they are able to recognise a potential or actual ‘mismatch’, they are showing that they have relevant skills for work in this sector.

Suggested Activity

Brainstorm with the class situations where the following characteristics might be of particular relevance to the client:

- ethnicity;
- tribal affiliation;
- gender;
- age;
- religion.

Here the kinds of answers you should be looking for include but are by no means limited to:

- **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 should always be used. 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 Bahá’í from the Middle East.

Ask each of the class members to write down the characteristics of a group or groups of entrants who they might find it challenging to work with.

Ask anyone who would like to share their list to do so – asking why they came to this conclusion.
It is highly likely that three significant characteristics were not mentioned – **class (socio economic status)**, **professional identity** and **attitudes with respect to others’ sexual orientation**. If they were not, it is important to introduce them and if they were, it is worth spending some time discussing them.

### i. Class/Socio Economic Status

It is probable that many of the participants come from comfortable – possibly privileged – backgrounds in their own countries. They are the ones who would have had access to education, have acquired a level of fluency in English and also be comfortable enough engaging with the wider community to be seen to be suitable for employment in the settlement sector ... after all, it is their bicultural skills that are seen as so valuable to employers.

While there are undeniably significant socio economic differences in Australia, the notion of class ... and the expectations and ways of behavior associated with ones class ... are not nearly as defined in Australia as in many parts of the world ... and many of the places they are most defined are the countries from which humanitarian entrants come.

Anyone who came from a well-to-do background in Africa, the Middle East or many parts of Asia would have grown up with ‘servants’ in the home and is likely to feel (consciously or subconsciously) a sense of superiority over the ‘masses’. This might be expressed in a number of ways including:

- the way they speak to others e.g. the absence of words that show courtesy and respect;
- their choice of words e.g. using patronising or demeaning terms;
- their body language;
- a lack of sense of entitlement for their clients (‘it’s good enough for them because they don’t know better’); etc

It is highly likely that some of the people who interact with people in this way have no idea they are doing it ... because it is the way they have always behaved and it is the way everyone around them has always behaved. In other words, they see it as ‘normal’.

The big issue here, however, is that clients who come from less privileged backgrounds will instantly pick up on the verbal and non-verbal clues. At the very least, they might feel intimidated by the worker, unable to open up, ask questions and develop a sense of rapport. At worst, it could revive memories of past mistreatment and lead to renewed trauma.

As previously mentioned, the class issue can work the other way round as well. Some entrants had a very high status in their country of origin and are used to considering others as ‘beneath them’. When they come to Australia and find themselves dependent on someone for whom they would previously had little respect, this can result in unhelpful dynamics being played out between the worker and the client.

While many of the other characteristics are easy for managers to identify and monitor, mismatches between clients and workers that stem from class differences are much harder to detect, especially if the manager comes from a different background. More often than not, the signs are very subtle and not necessarily detected by someone unfamiliar with the language. And familiarity with the language is not always a help because, as previously mentioned, people grow up thinking it is entirely normal to address certain kinds of people in certain ways.

### ii. Professional Identity

It is totally understandable that bicultural workers will be very excited to get a job as this reaffirms their own sense of self worth. They will probably also be very excited about the possibilities this affords them to help their own community. There are, however, some issues about which they need to be mindful.
The first relates to the fact that they are employed and their clients, most probably, are not. They need to be careful not allow their sense of achievement to be translated into a sense of superiority over others or to abuse the position of power that comes with employment by requiring or expecting others to do their bidding.

The second danger could possibly be called ‘over enthusiasm’. Having secured employment, they want to do everything they can for their community but find it hard to know where to draw the line. This goes to the complex issue of ‘boundaries’ that will be the subject of the next session.

iii. Attitudes about Others’ Sexual Orientation

Even within Australian culture where there is a high degree of acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex people and there are laws to protect their rights, there are people who find it difficult to cope with the concept of different sexual orientation. It is therefore of little surprise that workers who come from countries where difference in sexual orientation is seen as socially taboo or even against the law, are likely to find it even harder to cope. The reality, however, is that workers are likely to encounter such people because the humanitarian intake includes people who became refugees because of their sexual orientation and because there are people who became refugees for other reasons but who happen to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex in the intake.

Suggested Activity

Confronting these three issues with course participants isn’t easy and possibly the best way to do so would be to focus on DSS’s service principles for their Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP). While these principles are specifically applicable to those delivering HSP, it can be argued that they form a sound, ethical framework to guide all those working with refugees and other forced migrants.

It is thus recommended that you spend some time working through the HSP principles with the participants, stressing in particular on human worth and dignity and asking participants to suggest ways that they plan to incorporate these principles into their own interactions with clients and fellow workers. In other words – move beyond the theoretical discussion that took place in the previous session and focus on how their greater understanding of who they are and how others see them will shape their thinking and behaviour. Use this as a time to talk about strategies and to encourage participants to make suggestions and share experiences.

### 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.

41 For the full set of Principles see the DSS website: [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au)
Workplace Supervision

Before leaving this topic there is a very important point that needs to be stressed to participants. This is:

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

Resource


Participant 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

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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Boundaries</td>
<td>Activity and discussion</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing worker-client boundaries</td>
<td>Activity and discussion</td>
<td>60 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing worker-worker boundaries</td>
<td>Activity and discussion</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a number of participant activities are provided which can be done in class, assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher as additional study.

## Introduction

It is important to recognise that this is possibly the most important of all sessions and like the previous session, it:

- was not tackled earlier so as to allow time for everyone to get to know each other and build a sense of trust within the class;
- will require the participants to confront some challenging concepts and possibly unpalatable truths, not least how their decision to work in this sector will affect their place within their own community.

Every worker in the human services sector has to be aware of boundaries – i.e. maintaining a distance between themselves and their clients. You, as a trainer, will certainly be aware of it in the context of how you interact with students. There are, however, some additional dimensions to this issue for bicultural workers, especially those who come from small and emerging communities.
Bicultural Workers:

- are members of the communities with whom they are employed to work. Their friends will be within these communities and it is probable that the community will also be at the centre of their social life;

- often come from countries in which extended family is important and, in the absence of this, develop close relationships with people within their community;

- are in a situation where it is not just them that is part of the community but also their family. If their profession has an impact on how they are able to relate to others in their community, there is a possibility that it will not just affect them but also their spouse, their children and other family members. It might limit their opportunities for interaction and might influence how others see or interact with them;

- tend not to have the range of friends and acquaintances as people brought up in Australia, after all, they probably didn't go to school here, might not have had previous jobs, haven't necessarily had time to pursue hobbies and interests ... in fact, they won't necessarily have done the sorts of things that enable others in the community to make connections in various sectors. They are thus at a disadvantage if, for professional reasons, they have to distance themselves from people in one area of their life. Unlike others, they do not have friends in other areas with whom to socialise;

- might, depending on the nature of their employment as a bicultural worker, have to put their aspirations for pursuing leadership roles within their community on hold because of the potential for there to be conflicts of interest.

In addition to this, bicultural workers have to confront all of the other boundary-related challenges that other workers face, both in terms of their interactions with clients and their interactions with fellow workers.

Once again, tackling these issues will not be easy and it is important that you think through in advance how to manage the emotions that might be generated. There might be a need to arrange to speak to one or more of the participants immediately or in the days after the session.

**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.

While participants probably encountered the concept of boundaries in CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants, the opportunity to really unpack the issue was limited in this unit and it is likely that some of the participants will still find the concept rather strange and be grappling with both what it really means and how they can deal with it in the workplace.

**Suggested Activity**

Before presenting too much information about professional boundaries, it will probably be helpful for you, as a trainer, to explore what the participants know about and think about the notion of
boundaries. The more you know about this, the better you will be able to shape how you handle the rest of the session.

Begin by posing the question: what is meant by the term ‘professional boundary’?

Then brainstorm the following with the class:

What are some examples of professional boundaries?
Are there different kinds of professional boundaries? (HINT: those between worker and client, those between manager and staff and those between colleagues)
Why do we have professional boundaries?
How do boundaries protect clients?
How do boundaries protect workers?
How can you find out the boundaries specific to your workplace?

Guidelines about Boundaries

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 a new worker to ask to see the agency’s policies and to pay particular attention to what is said about boundaries. If there isn’t a written policy that covers boundaries, a new worker should make a point of asking his/her manager to explain the agency’s expectations of staff in this regard.

Managing Worker-Client Boundaries

The reality is that when a person accepts a position as a bicultural worker, s/he will have to accept that it will have a significant impact on their personal life and that this is an unfortunate but non-negotiable part of the job.

Unpacking the list of ‘don’ts’ shown above, being a bicultural worker means that, for the duration of your employment, 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.

**Suggested Activity**

Present the above list to the class.

Divide the class into groups and ask the groups to discuss what they feel about these restrictions and what they think they will mean for them and their immediate families.

Bring the class back together and ask them to share some of the points they discussed, recording these as you go. If the issue of managing expectations does not come up, steer participants in this direction.

Next ask the participants to identify the issues relating to maintaining boundaries they think will be hardest for them to deal with.

Assign one or two of these issues to each of the groups and ask them to come up with a short role play which demonstrates a strategy (or strategies) a worker can use to manage the issue.

Get the groups to present their role plays and after each, ask the remainder of the class whether they can think of other ways a worker could deal with a similar situation. In this, some guidance from the trainer is helpful, especially pointing out the strengths or weaknesses of the suggestions proffered and possibly adding some suggestions based on your own experience.

Suggest that it would be a good idea for participants to record these strategies somewhere that they can refer back to when they find themselves in a tricky situation with a client or a member of their own community.

Finally, pose the question: what do you do if things go wrong?

Guide the participants towards a recognition of the importance of discussing such issues with their manager and being open and honest when they feel they might have overstepped the mark and/or got themselves into some hot water. Remind them that the earlier a problem is identified and addressed, the easier it is to solve, whereas things that are allowed to go on for too long can become very messy and complicated.
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 divulging 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 explicitly forbidding such relationships and requiring one or both parties to leave if a relationship commences.

This being said, there is a certain inevitability that workplace romances will occur. 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 sours, 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.
Suggested Activity

Introduce the topic of ‘worker to worker boundaries’.

Ask participants to:

- suggest the reasons why boundaries are considered important in the workplace;
- reflect on how these compare with the situation in workplaces in their country of origin or other workplaces with which they are familiar;
- identify any of these areas that they think they might find challenging and encourage the group to make suggestions about how a worker can deal with this.

Then introduce the topic of workplace romances. Encourage participants to reflect on the problems these can create in the workplace and conclude with the list of unofficial conventions shown above.

Resources

Code of Ethics and Conduct. MDA Inc. www.mdainc.org.au/?page_id=42


Participant 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**

### TOPIC 9: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY

**AIM:** to enable participants to:

- identify the overt and covert signs of trauma in clients;
- understand the types of services available to traumatised clients;
- learn how to apply accepted procedures for linking clients to support services while continuing to work with them;
- understand vicarious traumatisation and learn how to recognise it in oneself and others;
- learn how to respond to vicarious traumatisation.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Trauma</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>35 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for Survivors of Trauma</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarious Traumatisation</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>45 mins</td>
</tr>
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</table>

In addition, a number of participant activities are provided which can be done in class, assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher as additional study.

### Introduction

Understanding the impact of torture and trauma on clients is essential for anyone working with refugees and other forced migrants because the incidence of both amongst this client load is so high.

This issue of torture and trauma was covered in CHCSET001: *Work with Forced Migrants* (Topics 4 and 12) and is the subject of many training programs delivered by specialised support agencies (see later for details). While there will be a little overlap in this session, it is important for you, as the trainer, to recognise that within the group with whom you are working are people for whom these issues have a added significance.

Participants in your class might:

- have been tortured themselves;
- have been exposed to one or more severely traumatic events or have suffered systematic and prolonged deprivation;
- have done or been forced to do things that they are now deeply ashamed about;
• have witnessed acts of brutality against family members and/or been in situations where they were helpless to prevent these;
• still have family members or close friends in a situation where they are in danger;
• be feeling guilty that they are safe in Australia while others have died or remain at risk;
• be in denial about what happened to them or what happened in their country;
• be seriously conflicted by the fact that others like them (same ethnic group, religion etc) were the perpetrators of atrocities; ...

By this stage of the course you might have a sense of which students have a particularly traumatic past ... but don’t fall into the trap of thinking that because someone has not said anything about their past, nothing happened. People deal with things in many different ways. Some ‘wear their history on their sleeves’ whereas others choose to keep their pain hidden from the world (and sometimes from themselves).

Be mindful as you teach this topic that it could well touch some raw nerves. If it is at all possible, think of a way to create some ‘informal time’ at the end of the session (e.g. have coffee and biscuits for the class to share) or be prepared to stay back for a while to talk to any participants you feel have been affected by the discussion. Your objective in doing this is to bring participants back to the present – to help them move away from the dark places the discussion took them and return them to a comfortable forward-looking space.

Understanding Trauma

The very nature of the refugee and forced migration experience is such that it goes without saying that 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 around the world. 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 has far reaching effects and can shake the very foundations of a person’s life. The impact can disrupt or damage the relationships that individuals 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 accompanied by unresolved grief and depression. For some survivors, assumptions that are central to human existence, such as trust, have been challenged by their experiences. 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.

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42 The following section draws on material produced by ASETTS and STARTTS and available on their websites.
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.

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 derive from those around us and many other factors.

**Signs of Traumatic Stress in Clients**

Not only does the impact of trauma differ from person to person, so too does the way it manifests. There is no ‘typical’ response to trauma. Some people mask their symptoms whereas in others they are overt and 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.\(^\text{43}\) 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).

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.

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\(^{43}\) Adapted from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Helpguide.org.
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 hyper-vigilance 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 mood or behaviour changes in their loved ones when there is no apparent explanation for these.

Working with Trauma Survivors

As mentioned, 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).

**Trauma or Culture Shock?**

Anyone who moves from one place to another – even if it is just from the city to the country – will experience culture shock. The bigger the difference between the way of life a person has been used to and that in their new home, the harder it will be for the person to feel comfortable within the new environment and the bigger the impact of culture shock will be. Culture shock manifests in many ways in no ways limited to the following:

• feeling nervous and/or inadequate;
• being reluctant to take the initiative;
• refusing to accept the need to adapt to new ways of doing things;
• feeling angry and/or frustrated;
• being aggressive and/or belligerent.

Many of these symptoms mirror those of post-traumatic stress.

The important thing for workers to recognise is that it is not their role to determine whether their client is exhibiting certain behaviours because of PTSD or culture shock. This is the role for trained professionals. Anyone exhibiting behaviour seen as being of concern should be referred for assessment.

**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
Queensland: QPASTT: www.qpastt.org.au
South Australia: STTARS: www.sttars.org.au
Victoria: Foundation House: www.foundationhouse.org.au
Western Australia: ASETTS: 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.

In addition, collectively these services have developed excellent resources and training programs.

The various programs are linked together through their membership of the **Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT)**. FASSTT is funded by its member agencies using resources from the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (PASTT), which in turn is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. In addition, the state-based agencies are also members of the **International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)**.

### Making Referrals

As previously mentioned, it is important for workers in the sector to recognise that, unless they have had specialist training, they are not the best equipped people to help clients deal with trauma. This is not to say that they do not have an important role to play working with the specialist counsellor, ensuring their work complements the intervention ... but they should never try to tackle things alone. Instead they should 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.

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44 You might find it valuable to revisit Topic 4 of CHCSW401A: Work Effectively with Forced Migrants before teaching this section.
**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>

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.

The first and most important step to convincing the client about the benefits of counselling is convincing the worker. Bicultural workers come from the same backgrounds as their clients and view the world in much the same way. Some of the participants in the class might have experienced counselling after their arrival, others might not. If you feel comfortable about doing this, you might like to ask participants about their experiences … or you might like to tackle this from a purely theoretical perspective.

If you have participants who seem to know little about the work of the local torture and trauma counselling service, it would be a good idea to encourage them to contact the service, identify who is the counsellor for their community and arrange to meet with this person to find out more about what s/he does and about the service more generally. Getting this information from someone from within their community will have a far greater impact than anything presented in a classroom.

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From their own confidence about the merits, safety and confidentiality of the counselling service should come the capacity to engage with their clients in a culturally appropriate manner about seeking help.

**Suggested Activity**

Print out a referral form from your local torture and trauma counseling service and get students to fill out a referral for your client who is a 13 year old boy from Afghanistan who has said to you:

*I didn’t know what to do. I am so lonely, nobody speak to me at school and some kids make fun of my bad English. Even though I know it is wrong, I punch them and then I get in trouble at my school. This makes things worse because I do not want to worry my parents. My mum is always crying. I am very worried about her and want to help her, but I don’t know how and everything I do just seems to make things worse. I feel so worthless and life is just too hard.*

Discuss their responses. It is important to ensure that participants have picked up this person’s vulnerabilities and that he could be at risk of suicide.

Then brainstorm what they would have said to the client to encourage him to speak to a counsellor.

**Vicarious Traumatisation**

*I don’t have a problem stepping into their shoes, it’s the stepping out again that’s difficult*. 46

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;
• 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 ‘pathologise’ these reactions (in other words to view them as medically or psychologically abnormal). 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;
• relationships with colleagues and, by extension, 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 and habitually 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;
- seeking someone to provide professional debriefing.

Debriefing is possibly an unfamiliar concept to some of the participants. It is thus worth explaining that debriefing can involve:

- confidential one-on-one sessions with a supervisor during which you talk about your work, the challenges you are facing and the way you are feeling;
- group debriefing sessions in which people share experiences of difficult situations. This can be a useful way of generating solutions because group members can discuss possible solutions, learn from each others past experiences and provide mutual support;
- learning stress management strategies;
- doing things that reinforce the value of your work;
- gaining an understanding of the causes of your difficulties and frustrations;
- learning what you can do through considering alternatives.

**Suggested Activity**

Divide the class into pairs or small groups. If it is possible to do so (and there aren’t isolates in the class), suggest that participants join with their friends for this.

Ask them to consider the following:

- Now that you know that vicarious traumatisation is something that might well happen to you in your job, how does this make you feel?
- Can you think of things your clients might say or do that will be particularly hard for you to hear?
- What frightens you most about this happening?
- What sort of things do you think would help you to deal with this?

Then ask each person to spend some time writing a Self Care Plan – in other words, a list of promises they make to themselves about the things they will do to look after themselves. Suggest they put this in their wallet so that they can refer to it later as a reminder of these promises.
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

Participant 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Challenges</td>
<td>Guided discussion</td>
<td>60 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survival Strategies</td>
<td>Discussion and activity</td>
<td>35 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Entrants</td>
<td>Guided reflection</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a number of participant activities are provided which can be done in class, assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher as additional study.

Introduction

The content of this session mirrors that in a number of the topics in CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants, most particularly:

- Topic 3: What is Settlement?
- Topic 4: The Impact of Forced Migration on Settlement.
- Topic 7: Teaching Life Skills.

It is included in this unit for two key reasons:

- The key concepts are important and worth reiterating.
- The fact that participants in this course are from the same or similar backgrounds to their clients adds additional dimensions to the content and this will be explored in this session as well as in the following session.
If you are not familiar with the aforementioned units in CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrant, you are encouraged to read these topics in the Trainer’s Guide for this unit as preparation for teaching this session so that you are able to make reference to and build upon the concepts about which the participants should have some recall.

**Settlement Challenges**

Given that most if not all of the participants in the class have had first hand experience of resettling (i.e. moving from one country to another and having to re-establish themselves in a new environment), there is merit in beginning the session by enabling the participants to revisit their own experiences.

**Suggested Activity**

Ask the class to reflect on the statement ‘Resettlement is like learning to walk again – only you are a lot heavier’.

Prompt them with questions such as the following:

- Does this statement describe how you felt?
- If not, is there another way of describing the challenges of resettlement?
- How did you feel when you first arrived in Australia?
- What things were very hard?
- Did anyone do anything you found very annoying/upsetting/unhelpful?
- Can you remember any funny events from your first few days?
- Did your family members deal with things in different ways?
- How did you feel about the people who helped you?
- What were the biggest challenges you faced:
  - in the first few days?
  - in the first month?
  - in the first year?
- Can you remember the things that helped you most? **Record these.**

Then ask the participants to ‘change hats’ and start to think like a worker. Pose questions along the following lines:

- From a worker’s perspective, what are the most important lessons they learnt from the previous discussion?
- Did anyone say anything that surprised them and/or was different to their own experience?
- What does this say about the way different entrants see things differently and have different needs?
- Was anything said that made them think about how they should interact with new clients?
- Were there lessons about priorities and if so, what?

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47 If they are not aware of the term ‘change hats’, it is worthwhile spending a little time explaining it. There will be times when they will have to think as a former entrant or member of their community and other times when they will have to think as (‘put on the hat of’) a worker. Being able to ‘switch hats’ is a very useful skill, as is being aware of when you are changing hats.
• Were there lessons about how to treat the various members within a family and if so, what?
• Was there any guidance about things to avoid doing?
• Did they learn about things that are very important for them to do?

As this discussion unfolds, build a list of key points/lessons on the board.

Before leaving this exercise (and if you think the following has not been sufficiently covered in discussion thus far), remind participants of the Department of Immigration’s definition of settlement:

... the process of adjustment you experience as you become established and independent in Australia.\(^48\)

Ask the following questions:

• Does this definition point to any issues we have not discussed?
• If so what?
• How can we incorporate these into the lessons we have learnt?

Remind the participants that in CHCSET001 Work with Forced Migrants, they would have encountered the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical Needs</th>
<th>Emotional Needs</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>
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<tr>
<td>Legal assistance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious expression</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Becoming part of the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for special needs groups (eg unaccompanied minors, sole parents etc)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spend some time discussing the table with the participants, focusing in particular on:

• 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.

Finally before moving on, encourage the participants to reflect upon the many challenges entrants face adapting to life in Australia. These might include but are by no means limited to 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

It would be valuable for you to read Topic 4 of the Trainer’s Guide for CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants in preparing for this section, in particular the part about Use of Obsolete Survival Strategies. The fundamental premise behind this is that during the troubles in their countries of origin and while in countries of first asylum, entrants have 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, bicultural workers 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 – having 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 their new-found knowledge to influence their attitudes to the entrants. Some obsolete survival strategies (such as lying about what they have been given) can make life very difficult for workers. If the same tactics are employed by someone in their own community ... and where their 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 they think they are superior to them because they know how to operate within the new country whereas the entrants don’t.
Suggested Activity

Begin by asking the participants to put their ‘new entrant’s hats’ back on and ask them to reflect upon and share the survival strategies they brought to Australia.

Record these according to whether they could be seen as useful or problematic in the new environment.

Then ask the participants to ‘switch hats’ and put on their ‘worker’s hat’. Divide the class into groups and allocate each group one or two of the survival strategies. Ask each group to:

- talk about this strategy in the Australian context;
- think about how they feel when a client used this strategy;
- develop a brief role play that shows a worker helping an entrant to understand the relevance of this survival strategy in Australia.

Ask the groups to present their role plays and then discuss these.

Supporting Entrants

Thus far this session has been about identifying settlement needs and challenges and has involved reflecting upon how to help entrants reshape their survival skills to suit their new environment. Participants have relived their own settlement experiences and heard those of others.

It is hoped that one of the things that came through during this discussion was the way in which settlement workers engaged with them when they were new entrants. Some of the things that were done might have been seen as helpful and other things less so. Before concluding this session there is merit in spending some time reflecting upon what have they learnt from the discussion about:

- the way they should interact with entrants?
- the attitudes towards the entrants they should seek to convey?

Once you have given the participants an opportunity to reflect upon this and share ideas, you might wish to identify the following essential traits for settlement workers:

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

References

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

STARTTS website has several valuable research papers: [www.startts.org.au](http://www.startts.org.au)

The Refugee Council Website also has research papers and useful advice on refugee issues. [www.refugeecouncil.org.au](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au)
UNHCR Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees. UNHCR. www.unhcr.org

FIELD REPORT, the Experiences of Students from Refugee Backgrounds at Universities in Australia: Reflections on the Social, Emotional and Practical Challenges, Andrew Joyce, Jaya Earnest, Gabriella De Mori and Genevieve Silvagni. School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Monash University, Cardinia-Casey Community Health Service, Southern Health Centre for International Health and Curtin University.

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.

   ... the process of adjustment you experience as you become established and independent in Australia.\(^{49}\)

   ... 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.\(^{50}\)

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?

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?


\(^{50}\) Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) at http://atwork.settlement.org/sys/atwork_library_detail.asp?doc_id=1003507
Topic 11: Making Best Use of Settlement Services

TOPIC 11: SESSION OVERVIEW
AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY

AIM: to enable participants to gain a greater understanding of 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 secure best outcomes for clients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Services for refugees and forced migrants</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>60 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral protocols</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement plans</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation between services</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a number of participant activities are provided which can be done in class, assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher as additional study.

‘...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.’

Carla (Sudan)\[51\]

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\[51\] Multicultural Development Association. Refugee Information. [www.mdainc.org](http://www.mdainc.org)
Introduction

As with the previous topic, this session covers similar ground to that covered in CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants, in particular that in Topics 3 and 7. It is important that you familiarise yourself with this material and possibly suggest that the participants read these sections of their Handbook for the other unit. While there is a little overlap, this session complements rather than replicates the other work and is intended to build upon the concepts and provide participants with the opportunity to become more familiar with the concepts and more confident in their application.

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>Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Services Program (SSP)</td>
<td>Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support Program</td>
<td>Language Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For more information go to <a href="http://www.dss.gov.au">www.dss.gov.au</a></td>
<td>English as a Second Language Program (ESL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist Torture and Trauma Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist Health and Mental Health Programs</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 formal and informal 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 sponsorship 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 schools 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.

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.\textsuperscript{52}

In reality, achieving these outcomes involves the service provider or proposer doing many things, including but not limited to:

- meeting entrants at the airport and taking them to initial accommodation;
- helping to familiarise entrants who are not used to urban environments with amenities such as electricity (ovens), gas stoves, telephones, flush toilets, running water;
- explaining emergency services and how to access them;
- accompanying to medical and other health appointments;
- explaining the costs and billing procedures for amenities like electricity, phone, and water;
- establishing a bank account, applying for Medicare, registering with Centrelink;
- helping entrants to access to public places like shopping centres, libraries, medical centres, pharmacies;
- familiarising entrants with Australian foods and cooking methods;
- assisting them to find outlets where they can buy culturally appropriate produce;
- assisting parents to enrol children in school and providing information about schooling system, including uniforms, school shoes, lunches, parent meetings;
- linking people to relevant ethnic community, religious or other relevant organisations;
- training entrants to use public transport, including familiarising them with timetables, bus routes, buying tickets;
- allaying fears or misconceptions about people in authority e.g. doctors, police, school principles;
- assisting entrants to find permanent accommodation;
- explaining Australian cultural practices and social norms e.g. shaking hands, maintaining eye contact during conversations etc.\textsuperscript{53}

Suggested Activity

Prepare tables with the following headings and have enough copies to hand to all the participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Service Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HSP Provider</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMEP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Resource Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Provided by Multicultural Development Association.

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(\textcopyright\textsuperscript{C}) Navitas English, AMES Australia, MDA Ltd and MPA
Ask the class to tell you what they know about services in the local area. Work with them to see how much of the table you can fill in. There will inevitably be gaps and you can either:

- assign the completion of the table as homework;
- have a fully completed table ready to hand out.

Stress to participants that it is essential that they have a good knowledge of the relevant services in the geographical area in which they are working. If appropriate, they should organise to visit these services or speak to someone from them soon after commencing employment to find out exactly what they do.

It is also a good strategy to have contact details such as those included in the table above in a diary or day planner so that it is available at all times.

### 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. Casemanagers or supervisors should be able to provide the necessary information about referral protocols for local agencies.

### Suggested Activity

The best way to learn about making referrals is to practice filling in a referral form.

For this exercise, a referral to the Specialised and Intensive Services that are provided under the Humanitarian Settlement Program has been selected, in large part because this is such an important program for bicultural workers to know about and it is one to which, irrespective of the role they have within an agency or in the community, they can make referrals.
About Specialised and Intensive Services

Specialised and Intensive Services (SIS) is a program funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS) under the Humanitarian Settlement Program to deliver specialised and intensive case management to humanitarian entrants with exceptional needs. The program provides flexible, tailored and localised responses to meet the individual needs of each case.

SIS is specifically targeted at supporting clients whose needs extend beyond the scope of core settlement services and it provides complementary and specialised support. It is designed to work in partnership with settlement and mainstream services to address the often significant barriers these clients face in settling in Australia.

SIS has three main client groups:
- Refugee entrants
- Special Humanitarian Program entrants
- Protection visa holders.

SIS covers a range of special needs including cases involving:
- Disability
- Mental health, emotional well-being issues
- Physical health issues
- Accommodation
- Domestic or family violence.

Clients are eligible for services for up to five years after their arrival in Australia. Flexibility may be shown to this timeframe in exceptional circumstances.

Anyone can refer a client for SIS assessment including:
- DSS funded service providers
- Commonwealth, state or territory government agencies
- Community and health organisations
- Volunteer groups
- Self referral.

To make a referral, complete a SIS referral form and forward it to the nearest DSS state or territory office.

After explaining the purpose of the Specialised and Intensive Services, hand out copies of the SIS Referral Form which you have downloaded from the DSS website at:


Also hand out copies of the following case study:

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54 Adapted from DSS Fact Sheet: Referral for Specialised and Intensive Services: www.dss.gov.au.
SIS Case Study

Peter arrived with his wife and 5 children from Liberia 18 months ago. They had lived in camps for 10 years, with three of the children born in camps.

Being a large family, as well as a proposer for several of his siblings overseas (and therefore needing extra rooms for them in their initial settlement stages) Peter needs a large house. He found a 5 bedroom house, but six months later he and his family were issued with a termination notice because the owner wanted to sell the house. Peter found another house but he has just been informed that the owner needs to sell urgently.

Complicating the matter is the fact that Peter’s wife has recently left him and the children and he has become a single parent.

Peter wants to remain in the area to be near his family and community support, but with large and affordable houses especially difficult to secure, his attempts to find suitable accommodation have been unsuccessful. He is highly stressed, has no financial reserves, is on the verge of homelessness and is very angry because he believes that all his problems have been caused by racism.

Complicating matters further, Peter has recently been diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer. He has been told by his doctors that he will require several periods of hospitalisation and the treatment he will receive will leave him weak and incapacitated for several weeks after leaving hospital.

Either as a class or in groups, complete the SIS referral form. Discuss issues and challenges as they arise.

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. Once again it is not intended to recover this ground. It would be useful for you, as a trainer, to review the content of the CHCSET001 Trainer’s Guide for this session and you might even ask the participants to revise from their Handbook.

The key reason for reintroducing the subject in this context is to emphasise to people destined to work as bicultural workers that:

- 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;

- 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.

Cooperation between Services

The last two points in the pervious section 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’.

Suggested Activity

Begin by reiterating the importance of cooperation in the delivery of settlement services, highlighting that this cooperation is equally necessary between:

- different agencies;
- the workers in different agencies;
- the workers within one agency.

Ask the class to suggest practical ways that workers from one service can build a strong cooperative relationship with workers from a complementary service. You might need to guide participants towards things such as:

- show respect, including:
  - treat colleagues with courtesy,
  - respect the different contributions each person can make;
- practice humility (i.e. not thinking you have all the answers);
- have a shared vision;
- recognise that the task requires everyone to act responsibly and do that which they undertook to do;
- share rather than withhold relevant information;
- make good use of reflective listening;
- keep the bigger picture in sight;
- ensure that the best interests of clients underpin every decision/action.

If you have time, you might wish to ask participants to reflect on what these concepts mean in terms of day to day behaviour/interactions in the workplace.

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:

- NT: [www.gpnnt.org.au](www.gpnnt.org.au)
- SA: South Australian Refugee Health Network: [www.sarhn.org.au](www.sarhn.org.au)
- WA: Western Australian Refugee Health Network: [www.warhn.org](www.warhn.org)

State and Territory governments:

- [www.multicultural.qld.gov.au](www.multicultural.qld.gov.au)
- [www.equalopportunity.wa.gov.au](www.equalopportunity.wa.gov.au)

**Participant Activities**

1. Use a search engine to find information about the following programs 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\(^55\) 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?

\(^55\) Multicultural Development Association. Refugee Information. [www.mdainc.org](www.mdainc.org)
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?

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC 12: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AIMS:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To revisit any issues that need more attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To enable participants to revisit the discussion in Topic 1 and reflect on key issues including but not limited to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the most important things they have learnt during the course and why this is the case;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the things they have learnt about themselves and how their awareness of these should shape their working style;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the strategies they have learnt that will help them meet the challenges;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• what future training they will need to help them progress in their career in Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfinished business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, a number of participant activities are provided which can be done in class, assigned as homework or suggested by the teacher as additional study.

**Unfinished Business**

It is possible (probable) that during the course of teaching this unit you have felt that it would have been good to have had more time to explore certain issues and/or you have identified participants’ learning needs that you would have liked to address. This final session has been intentionally left without new content to give you some time to pick up on any ‘unfinished business’ and/or explore issues that you feel would complement the material you have covered during this unit.

If you feel that there is no need to do this, it is not a problem. You can move onto the next section which is very important for the participants … and possibly for you too as a trainer.
Reflection

In the first session, you asked the participants to reflect upon the following questions:

- Why do you want to be a bicultural worker with forced migrants?
- What do you see as the most important parts of the role of a bicultural worker?
- What are you most looking forward to when you become a bicultural worker?
- Is there anything you are feeling scared or anxious about?
- What do you think will be the biggest challenges for you in the Australian workplace?
- Do you think there are any additional challenges that bicultural workers face?
- (If not already discussed) what do you think the most challenging things you will face when you are working in your own community?
- Do you have any idea about how you will overcome these challenges?
- What are the things you most want to learn from this course?

A very important part of the learning process is the recognition that you have learnt new skills and knowledge and the realisation that the way you view the world has changed. Hopefully the following exercise will enable participants to gain these insights.

Suggested Activity

Remind the participants of the questions (above) they answered in the first session and if you still have it, display the butchers’ paper on which their answers were recorded.

Depending on the dynamics within the group, you might wish to divide the class into groups or keep them together. Ask them to go through these questions and think about what their answers would be now and the areas in which their thinking has changed.

If this discussion happened in groups, bring the class together for some collective reflection.

Then suggest that the participants spend a little quiet time writing down the things they have learnt about themselves during the course. Stress that this is for them alone and they do not have to share it with anyone.

Self Awareness = Empowerment

Finally, bring the class together again to focus on the future.

Ask them to share:

- the skills and strategies they have learnt that they think will be the most valuable for them in meeting the many challenges they will face as bicultural workers;
- their thoughts about any future training needs they have identified. Be ready to provide direction and advice in relation to this … either in class or with the offer of providing more information once you have done some research.

Again, depending on the dynamics within the group, you might wish to suggest that participants might wish to stay in touch with each other in some form of informal support network – meeting occasionally to talk about how things are going, or sharing issues via an email group. In doing this, be mindful of teacher-student boundaries and do not buy into their plans unless you will have an ongoing professional relationship with the participants that is quite separate to that of your role as trainer.
Closing Activity

You and the participants have been on a journey together ... possibly very different to the usual journey you undertake with students. This course has required you to put yourself into the shoes of people from backgrounds very different to your own and it has required them to rethink the way they look at themselves and view the world around them. Don’t just shut the door on this ... acknowledge and embrace it.

Sharing food and music and stories is a good way to do this ... or you might have other creative ideas.
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’.

**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.

______________________________
56 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.
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).

References

Council of Europe (2004), Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion

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