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**Feedback from Course Participants**  
Overall, I have a much better and more professional understanding and knowledge in this field. I feel I’m more ready to be a settlement worker than before.  

I expected to learn the basics in this course, however it has opened my eyes to new and unexpected things that I thought were irrelevant before.
Introduction

1. Course Overview

This course has been developed in a format that allows the unit to be delivered over 12 sessions, each of 2 hours, involving 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 (see below) 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>Course overview and introduction to forced migration</td>
<td>2.1 + important knowledge evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Australia’s response to forced migration</td>
<td>2.1+ important knowledge evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What is settlement?</td>
<td>1.1 2.1 2.4 2.5 3.2 3.3 3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The impact of forced migration on settlement</td>
<td>1.1 2.1 2.2 2.4 2.5 3.3 3.4 3.5 3.6 3.7 3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Understanding refugee communities</td>
<td>1.2 2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4 3.1 3.2 3.3 3.6 3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Working with clients #1 - First steps</td>
<td>1.1 1.2 1.3 2.4 2.5 2.6 3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Working with clients #2 - Teaching life skills</td>
<td>1.1 1.2 1.3 2.4 2.5 2.6 3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This following contains the guidance from the Industry Skills Council
Issued in August 2015 about this unit of competency

2. **Application**

This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to work with, and for, refugees within an ethical, social, political and economic context.

This unit applies to work within an agency, directly or indirectly, involved with the provision of services to forced migrants, people with *Refugee or special humanitarian visas*, those granted refugee status in Australia, business and skilled migrants whose prime motivation for leaving their country was to escape violence and/or persecution, and the immediate family members of anyone from the aforementioned groups.

Workers will have limited responsibilities and work within established guidelines to develop, monitor and provide support and services in a range of areas, including but not limited to, settlement, accommodation, counselling, financial advice, family services, youth work, income support, education, health care and crisis intervention.

*The skills in this unit must be applied in accordance with Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation, Australian/New Zealand standards and industry codes of practice.*
### 3. Elements and Performance Criteria

The following elements and performance criteria are embedded within CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants.

**Elements** define the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.

**Performance Criteria** describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the Element.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Performance Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Develop a professional rapport with people who are forced migrants | 1.1 Consider cultural sensitivities in communication techniques and adapt style and language to accommodate different cultural values and practices  
1.2 Identify how one’s own ethnicity, religion, class and gender will affect interactions with clients and modify approach appropriately  
1.3 Identify the communication needs of clients who are newly arrived, traumatised and confused and modify approach appropriately  
1.4 Identify where an interpreter is needed and work to ensure that appropriate interpreter services are accessed |
| 2. Plan settlement services | 2.1 Identify current issues which may impact on own work or organisation  
2.2 Collect, discuss and use the views of key stakeholders and representatives from relevant target groups when determining service requirements  
2.3 Develop and maintain links with workers with complementary roles in the provision of settlement services  
2.4 Evaluate issues in relation to a person’s culture, family background and interest and modify plan appropriately  
2.5 Identifying specific needs of individuals and determine learning program requirements  
2.6 Document and agree plan with client and other relevant service providers or stakeholders |
| 3. Address issues associated with people who are forced migrants | 3.1 Provide support to clients using a collaborative approach  
3.2 Discuss and provide information regarding the range of services available in Australia and the importance of using these services  
3.3 Take into account the culture, religion, gender and experiences of the person in all actions and decisions  
3.4 Recognise trauma and refer to appropriate personnel or services  
3.5 Support clients to deal with loss and grief |
3.6 Support clients to deal with discrimination from both the mainstream community and from other ethnic groups
3.7 Support client to make appropriate links both within their own community and within the broader Australian community
3.8 Refer clients to other service providers as required

4. Monitor and review support

4.1 Obtain ongoing feedback from clients in relation to service and support
4.2 Evaluate progress in relation to service provision plan
4.3 Monitor stress and emotions of self and colleagues and implement strategies to maintain wellbeing
4.4 Identify opportunities for improved service provision and modify approach

**Foundation Skills**

The Foundation Skills describe those required skills (employability skills, language, literacy and numeracy) that are essential to performance.

*Foundation skills essential to performance are explicit in the performance criteria of this unit of competency.*

**Unit Mapping Information**

No equivalent unit.

**4. Assessment**

**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.

**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 developed, delivered and monitored the delivery of a settlement plan for 3 groups of forced migrants.
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
- drivers and issues associated with migration and forced migration, including:
  - what migration is and what forms it takes
  - causes and impacts of forced migration
  - knowledge of the international protection regime
  - Australia’s response to forced migration
  - immigration processes, including how and why people selected to come to Australia
  - meaning of various visa subclasses
  - the profile of the current humanitarian program entrants, their experience and the impact of this on their settlement needs
- settlement process, practices and policies in Australia, including:
  - current and historical context of work in this sector
  - social, political and economic context in which the sector operates
  - what is settlement: current theories, phases and indicators
  - practical and emotional settlement needs of new migrants
  - services available to new migrants and how these services can be accessed
  - settlement plans and how they are developed
  - government service principles
- service delivery frameworks
- refugee experience and recognising effects of grief, loss, stress, torture and trauma
- post traumatic stress disorder
- the impact of migration on the family and the impact of change roles within the family
- the importance of identity, including recognising the significance of giving clients a chance to define themselves according to either their ethnicity or their current circumstances
- availability of resources and assistance within, and external to, the organisation, including relevant referral networks and how to access their services
- international and Australian perspectives on gender, class, culture and religion.
Assessment Appeals Procedures

If participants wish to have their assessment results reviewed, they may request this through you immediately after they have participated in the assessment task. You will need to ask the course coordinator to arrange a reassessment of the participant’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. For any further information please contact Margaret Piper at margpiper@optusnet.com.au.
About the Topic Notes

While Australia has been resettling refugees and other forced migrants in significant numbers since the end of the Second World War, it was not until recently that attention was given to the importance of preparing those who supported them for the important work they were undertaking. There had been an expectation that the skills and knowledge acquired during training to be a community worker, social worker, teacher, nurse or other professional would cover their work with refugees. Increasingly, however, it has been recognised that refugees and other forced migrants have needs additional to and distinct from those of other migrants and Australian born people. By a logical extension, those working with them need additional skills and knowledge to equip them for this work.

It was this recognition that inspired a group of workers in the settlement sector to join forces to advocate for the inclusion of two new units in the National Training Framework:

- CHCSW401A: Work Effectively with Forced Migrants.
- CHCSW402B: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia.

Having done this, the same group joined forces again to develop training materials to support the units, recognising that within the group and the agencies to which these people were attached was a wealth of knowledge and experience. The Trainer's Guide, and the accompanying Participant's Handbook, drew on this expertise in the hope that it would be of benefit to trainers, workers and the sector as a whole ... and of course to forced migrants who deserve to receive the best quality support we can offer.

In August 2015, these units were superseded by:

- CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants
- CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia.

To incorporate the changes to the units contained within these revisions and to update statistics and web addresses, this guide and the accompanying training materials were updated, though at the same time, ensuring the core principles referred to above were maintained.

This guide has been written to assist trainers to teach CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants. It 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 the 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 CHCSET001 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 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.

This Trainer’s Guide is part of a package of materials designed to support CHCSET001: Work with Forced Migrants. The other materials are:

- a Participant’s Handbook
- an Assessment Guide (access restricted to Registered Training Organisations).

In addition, there is a complementary set of training materials available for CHCSET002: Undertake Bicultural Work with Forced Migrants in Australia and for CHCYTH001: Engage Respectfully with Young People (from Refugee Backgrounds).

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

AMES Australia: http://www.ames.net.au/bookshop
MDA Ltd: http://www.mdaltd.org.au
Navitas English: http://www.navitasenglish.com.au
Topic 1: Course Overview and Introduction to Forced Migration

**TOPIC 1: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY**

**AIM:** to introduce the unit and to provide a conceptual framework upon which later topics can be built.

<table>
<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 assessment tasks</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration and forced migration</td>
<td>Clarification of terms supported by activity</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are refugees</td>
<td>Teacher presentation supported by activity</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International protection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The refugee experience</td>
<td>Use of presentation provided or guest speaker</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durable solutions for refugees</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>15 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.

**Introducing the Course**

Before you begin on the substance of this topic, it is wise to spend some time getting to know the participants and their motivations for taking this unit. You should explain what will be covered during the course and how and when assessments will be conducted.

It is also recommended that you both familiarise yourself with the definitions set out in the table below and explain to the participants that during this session it is important that they pay attention as you define these words as they are core concepts in this subject area.
### Migration

In broad terms, the term ‘migration’ means moving from one place to another. In the context of this unit, it means moving from one country to another.

### Forced Migration

Forced migration is movement from one country to another by necessity rather than choice. The catalyst for such migration might be:

- war or civil unrest
- persecution
- economic hardship
- environmental degradation ...

The opposite of forced migration is voluntary migration.

It is noted that in some cases, there might be elements of choice and compulsion in a person’s decision to move to another country.

### Forced Migrant

Forced migrants are people who have been compelled to move countries rather than having done so voluntarily.

For the purposes of this unit, the term ‘forced migrants’ embraces people who have:

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

It might also be used in the future to cover people who have been displaced because their home/homeland is no longer viable due to global warming.

It is noted that the term ‘forced migrant’ is not widely used in Australia, though it is internationally. It was selected for use in this context because unlike the word ‘refugee’, it does not have a narrow technical definition and is not linked to any visa subclass.

### 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 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.

An asylum seeker is a person who is seeking the protection of another country and in so doing is exercising one of the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

**Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution**

UDHR Article 14

One of the outcomes of such an application might be the grant of refugee status. An asylum seeker might also be allowed to remain on other grounds or, if there are no grounds to remain, be compelled to return to his/her country of origin.

While every refugee will at some time have been an asylum seeker, not every asylum seeker is a refugee.

The term ‘internally displaced persons’ or IDPs is used to describe people who have been forced to flee or leave their homes, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised border.

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

**What is Migration?**

While migration is a broad term and can mean many things (including the seasonal movement of animals, birds or fish), in this context ‘migration’ is used to refer to the movement of people across an international border. It can be voluntary or forced.

**Suggested Activity**

Share with the participants the definition of ‘migration’ and ask them to brainstorm the different reasons why people migrate from one country to another (eg to get a better job, to join family members, to escape war …). Record the responses.

Ask whether there are discernible patterns in terms of motivation. Steer discussion towards identifying that some migration is voluntary, some is involuntary and some is possibly a mixture of the two.
Forced Migration

Present the definitions of ‘forced migration’ and ‘forced migrant’ (as set out in the table above) to the participants.

Suggested Activity

This activity can be done as a whole group, in small groups or in pairs. Ask the participants to identify some of the key differences between voluntary and forced migrants. Some of the things you should hope to see in the responses would include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voluntary Migrants</th>
<th>Forced Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have chosen to leave</td>
<td>Are not able to remain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can sell assets and pack belongings</td>
<td>Often have to leave in a hurry and cannot take assets or belongings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can learn what they need to know about their new country</td>
<td>Often do not know where they are going or will end up so cannot prepare themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can say goodbye to family and friends</td>
<td>Sometimes have to leave in secret and cannot say farewell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can return for visits</td>
<td>Cannot return to their former country if things do not go well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Refugees

Of the various types of forced migrants that might have been mentioned in discussion, it is important to recognise that refugees are distinct. This is because:

- the definition of a refugee is codified in law,
- refugees are protected by a specific international treaty.

For this reason, some time will be spent looking at who refugees are and how they are protected.

Because the word ‘refugee’ is so widely misused, it is important to spend a little time with the participants explaining the legal definition of the term as presented in the table at the beginning of this section.

The term ‘refugee’ is defined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (the Refugee Convention) which is the key international treaty on refugees. The same definition is used in Australian law (in the 1958 Migration Act).¹

¹ There is an exception to this. A modified definition is applied for asylum seekers who arrived by boat after 13 August 2012.
When explaining the definition, it is important to emphasise that in order to be determined to be a refugee, a person must satisfy all four of the following criteria. Refugees must:

- be outside their country of origin;
- have a well-founded fear of persecution: in other words, there must be a high probability that they will experience grievous abuse of their rights (persecution) if they were to return to their country of origin;
- be targeted for persecution because of one or more of the following; their:
  - race
  - religion
  - nationality
  - political opinion, and/or
  - membership of a social group;
- be unwilling or unable to receive effective protection from the government of their country of nationality or habitual residence. In most instances, this is because the government is the agent of persecution, though there are occasions where the government is no longer functioning or because of the pervasive power of non-state agents (for example the Taliban in certain areas of Afghanistan).

It is important to note that people fleeing war or civil unrest do not automatically fall under the definition, though in some cases they do. They only do if, in the context of the unrest, they are being targeted for any of the grounds outlined above.

After defining ‘refugee’, present the definitions of ‘refugee status’ and ‘asylum seeker’ as shown in the table at the beginning of this section.

**Suggested Activity**

Provide the participants with the following Case Study. Either in class or for homework, ask them to identify the most pertinent facts for a refugee status claim.

*Bashir (19) is a citizen of Theseus. He belongs to a minority ethnic group. Fifteen years ago, the Government of Theseus stripped the members of his ethnic group of their citizenship and took their land. The authorities stopped issuing identity documents to members of this minority. Instead, they are designated as ‘foreigners’ or ‘unregistered’ and on this basis their stay in Theseus is tolerated.

Theseus is not a prosperous country and members of Bashir’s ethnic minority have only limited access to the labour market. They are not entitled to public education,*
nor are they allowed to form political parties or other organisations. Some members of the ethnic group who have spoken out and demanded respect for the human rights of the members of the group have been imprisoned and mistreated. For all these reasons, Bashir feels that he has no future in Theseus. He crosses the border and applies for refugee status in neighbouring Hermia. 

When discussing the case study with the participants, you should emphasise that Bashir has met all four requirements for refugee status:

- Outside country of origin: yes – he has left Theseus and is in Hermia.
- Well-founded fear of persecution:
  - he has been denied many fundamental rights, including but not limited to the rights related to citizenship, ownership of property, access to education and employment and freedom of association;
  - members of his ethnic group have been imprisoned and mistreated.
- Grounds for persecution: he is a member of an ethnic group.
- Protection from the State: he has been stripped of his citizenship.

To learn more about fundamental human rights go to the website of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/WhoWeAre.aspx

To see the text of human rights treaties go to: www.ohchr.org/english/law/.

The International Protection Regime

As previously mentioned, there is an international treaty specifically dealing with refugees: the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (sometimes called the 'Refugee Convention').

The Refugee Convention was written in response to the population displacement after the Second World War and made specific reference to this caseload. As time went on, it became apparent that the 'refugee problem' was neither related only to WWII nor confined to Europe. To remove the temporal and geographic limitations of the Convention, a protocol (the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees) was drafted and adopted.

There is general agreement that both treaties are central to the international refugee protection regime.

In addition to defining the term 'refugee', the Convention and Protocol set minimum standards for the treatment of refugees and defines States’ obligations towards refugees.

The office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the agency with the prime responsibility for the protection and welfare of refugees. As its name suggests, it falls within the United Nations system and receives its mandate from the United Nations General Assembly.

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2 Case study from UNHCR’s self-study module on Refugee Status Determination.
Based in Geneva, UNHCR has over 9,300 staff in 123 countries and an annual budget of over US $7 billion.

Go to www.unhcr.org to learn more about UNHCR and to see the texts of the Refugee Convention and Protocol.

The Refugee Convention is not the only international treaty that is relevant for refugees. Refugee Law sits side by side with – and overlaps in part – with other important international legal instruments that fit within other areas of international law.

We witnessed this when we looked at Bashir’s claims for refugee status. His persecution was linked to denial of rights that are set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This is one of the two key treaties within International Human Rights Law. Also relevant is International Humanitarian Law. This is the legal framework relevant in times of war or conflict.

It is important to note that while forced migrants who are not refugees are not covered by the Refugee Convention, they do have rights (at least in theory) under other international treaties including but not limited to:

- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment
- the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

**Refugee Status**

The process of determining whether someone is a refugee is done either by the government of the country to which the refugee has fled or by staff of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In both instances, they assess the person’s claims against the definition of a refugee contained in the Refugee Convention.

Refugee status bestows certain rights on refugees. These are outlined in the Refugee Convention. The most significant of these rights are:

- the right not to be sent back to a country in which their life or freedom would be in danger
- the right to receive public relief and welfare support at the same level as nationals
- the right to access education and health care
- the right to work
- entitlement to be issued with identity papers and travel documents.

It is important to note that there is an exception to the granting of refugee status. If a person fits all of the criteria BUT has committed a war crime, a crime against humanity, a crime against peace or a serious non-political crime, that person is excluded from receiving the protection accorded by refugee status.

**The Refugee Experience**

Talking about ‘the refugee experience’ is a huge generalisation because no two refugees have the same ‘experience’. Even people within the same family will be exposed to different events and view the things that happen to them in different ways according to a variety of factors including their gender, age and disposition. Having said this, it is possible to point to some common characteristics of forced migration that have an impact on refugees. In their *Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees*, UNHCR seek to portray the complex interplay of factors affecting refugees. These have been summarised in the following table:

### Emotional Consequences
- e.g. fear, anxiety, grief, guilt, depression, shame, helplessness, loss of ability to trust etc

### Personal and Social Consequences
- e.g. social and economic dependency, loss of control, poor health, disrupted education/employment, lack/loss of family support, changed family relationships, cultural racial and religious integrity undermined, loss of sense of place/belonging etc

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**Suggested Activity**

It can be difficult for people who have always lived in a stable country to understand what it is like to experience persecution and be forced from your homeland. The following exercise has been developed to combine facts, emotions and images to build some form of connection to the experiences of refugees for people for whom this is not a lived experience. **PLEASE NOTE: please be vigilant for any participants who are affected by the presentation and make provision to spend some time with them after the class.**

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3 Adapted from UNHCR Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees: Section 1.3 pp 16-17. At [www.unhcr.org/3d985c8d6.html](http://www.unhcr.org/3d985c8d6.html)

4 If you have significant numbers of participants from refugee backgrounds, it is recommended that you modify this activity by using the slides to represent the stages of the refugee experience and asking participants whether they would like to share any of their experiences in relation to these stages. Remember – encourage but do not cajole them to speak. Some former refugees might find memories too painful to confront or articulate publicly.
Read or paraphrase the following overview. You might wish to accompany this with images downloaded from the photo gallery on UNHCR’s website (www.unhcr.org).

While every refugee has his or her own story, there are a number of common features of the refugee experience. This begins with the persecution that caused them to flee.

For many this has involved exposure to high levels of violence. They might have witnessed the deaths of family members and close friends, seen widespread carnage or been targeted themselves. They might have been imprisoned and tortured. A significant number of both women and men might have experienced sexual violence or been forced to witness loved ones being raped.

Most have spent prolonged periods living in fear. They survived by trusting no one – especially anyone in authority - and by doing or saying anything to protect themselves and their family.

For those who escaped the overt violence, life was also precarious. Denied basic rights and any security, they never knew what was going to happen next and when their world would collapse around them.

When things become intolerable, they take flight in search of protection. Many refugees are not able to use conventional means of travel because these are denied to them. They have to escape in a clandestine fashion, placing their lives in the hands of smugglers or braving inhospitable terrain. Countless hundreds, possibly thousands, of asylum seekers die each year of exposure, thirst or starvation; others drown in treacherous boat voyages; others are murdered by the very people they hoped would take them to safety.

For some, the journey takes days or weeks. For others, like the Lost Boys of Sudan, the journey into exile takes years.

While crossing an international border makes a victim of persecution a refugee and thus entitled to the protection of the international community, the reality for most is that this is just the beginning of a whole new set of challenges and obstacles.

Being a refugee is about waiting ... waiting for assistance, waiting for status, waiting for a future ... a wait that for some is measured in decades rather than years.

Many refugees are quite literally confined to camps such as Kakuma in northern Kenya, which together with another large camp further to the east (Dadaab), is home to over 200,000 refugees from Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia. Camp life is one of enforced dependency, with few opportunities for meaningful activity.

Not all refugees live in camps but the life of an urban refugee is no easier. More often than not their status is precarious and they run the risk of being picked up by authorities, imprisoned or deported. They face discrimination in the workforce and when trying to find somewhere to live. Education and health care are often denied to them and local people are quick to blame them for the problems besetting their own country.

Everything they were and everything they had is behind them. Doctors and politicians, herdsmen and artisans share the same fate. Their dreams for the future have been shattered. They have no idea of what the future might bring.

They mourn the loss of loved ones. They mourn the loss of their home. They mourn the loss of certainty.

They feel guilty about anything they might have said or done that resulted in this loss. They feel guilty that they are still alive while others are not.

They feel ashamed of things they have done. They feel ashamed of the things they must do in order to feed and protect their family.
And they have a seemingly infinite amount of time in which to reflect on all of this.

The refugee experience is also about scarcity.

While quick to respond to a well-publicised tsunami or earthquake, international aid donors are much less interested in providing the ongoing support needed by refugees waiting for a solution to the problems besetting their homeland. Over time, rations are cut and any support they might have initially received from their hosts dries up as they overstay their welcome. In many African refugee camps, the food rations provide less than half the recommended calorific intake and ‘luxuries’ like soap have been dispensed with to save money. When there is not enough to go around, people resort to all sorts of measures to feed their children.

Possibly the most tragic aspect of the refugee experience is that the safety they sought is often elusive.

Refugee camps can be very dangerous places; so dangerous in fact that in many camps international staff members leave at sunset.

The weak and vulnerable are easy prey for the gangs that operate within them and who use extortion and violence to maintain a power base.

Those who flee the violence of the camps run the risk of being targeted by locals or by the police who, in many countries of the world, view refugees as easy prey.

Sadder still is the fact that in some places, the very people sent to protect refugees, including international peace keepers and police, became the perpetrators of extortion and sexual abuse.

It is little wonder that refugees find it hard to trust.

If you have any people from forced migrant background in your class, be mindful that this might have affected them. You might like to give them an opportunity, should they wish to do so, to reflect on their own experiences. At the very least, try to spend some time with them before they leave at the end of the session to check that they are alright.

For further information about vicarious traumatisation and how to respond, go to Topic 12.

**Alternative Activity**

Instead of the above, you might wish to invite a former refugee to speak to the class. To manage this, it is a good idea to discuss the presentation with the refugee beforehand and work out a series of questions you can pose to guide discussion before opening it up to the participants to ask questions.

If you choose this activity, make sure you spend some time with the former refugee after the session to ‘bring them back to the present’. They will have spent time in a painful mental place and it is important that you do not leave them there. Sharing a coffee or chatting about fun things can help the person move away from that place and be strong enough to go back out into the world.
Durable Solutions for Refugees

UNHCR talks in terms of three ‘durable solutions’ for refugees:

- **Repatriation:** every refugee dreams of being able to return in safety and dignity to their homeland but this requires substantial and durable change to have occurred for it to be a viable option.

- **Local Integration:** there was once a time when many refugees were able to make a new life in the neighbouring country to which they first fled. This was seen as preferable because the language, religion and culture were often similar to their own. Over the years, the willingness of host states to offer this as an option has declined (in large part because of the absence of support from the international community) so now, while it remains a solution in theory, it is available to very few refugees.

- **Resettlement:** this involves moving to a third country, often a long way away (both in distance and culture) from the refugees’ homeland.

Some 27 countries work with UNHCR to provide resettlement places to refugees, though most offer very small numbers of places and consequently only a very small proportion of the world’s refugees are resettled in any one year.

By far the majority of refugees are resettled by three countries: Australia, Canada and the United States. On average, Australia has had the highest per capita resettlement program.

Selection for resettlement involves an assessment in addition to that undertaken to determine whether a person is a refugee and is done primarily on the basis of risk. This could be any one or a combination of the following risks:

- being sent back to a country in which they would face persecution,
- being expelled to a third country where they would face danger,
- exposure to violence,
- being arbitrarily detained,
- having no access to any form of support,
- the absence of a durable solution.

Consideration is also given to whether it is viable for the refugee to return to their homeland.

If they cannot safely or viably remain where they are, and if return is not an option, UNHCR assesses their suitability for resettlement. Because the number of resettlement places is limited, resettlement is typically only an option for about 1% of the world’s refugees in any given year.

The responsibilities of nations engaged in the resettlement of refugees have been clearly defined by the UNHCR as providing protection and access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals.

While there is much talk of durable solutions, the reality for the majority of the world’s refugees is that these remain elusive and they must confront other far less durable solutions: being ‘warehoused’, returning against their will (involuntary return) or engaging in secondary movement.

The term ‘refugee warehousing’ was coined in an effort to draw attention to a very serious issue that has received too little attention for far too long.
Warehousing⁵ is the practice of keeping refugees in protracted situations of restricted mobility, enforced idleness and dependency in violation of their rights under the Refugee Convention. The term was coined in an effort to draw attention to the seriousness of the situation and the need for action, something that is not as apparent the alternative descriptor: ‘protracted refugee situations’.

There are almost 40 protracted refugee situations in the world and the average duration of time spent in refugee camps is 25 years.⁶

Other refugees face either forced return or coerced return (where rations are withdrawn and refugees have no choice but to go back). In many cases this is in violation of their rights as refugees and of the state’s obligations towards them.

When faced with the prospect of a seemingly never-ending time being ‘warehoused’ and/or the threat of return to danger and/or lack of security in the country of first asylum, some refugees take matters into their own hands. They set forth in the hope that they will be able to find protection in some distant land, often seeking the help of smugglers to do so. If they survive the journey and are not intercepted on route, these people become the asylum seekers we see in Western Countries.

References

UNHCR Handbooks:

UNHCR Resettlement Handbook: www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=46f7c0ee2&query=resettlement%20handbook

UNHCR Handbook on the Resettlement and Integration of Resettled Refugees: www.unhcr.org/3d985c8d6.html

Useful websites:

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: www.unhcr.org
- United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: www.ohchr.org
- Human Rights Watch: www.hrw.org
- Amnesty International: www.amnesty.org
- US Committee for Refugees: www.refugees.org

Simulations:

Against All Odds: an online game developed by UNHCR which lets people experience what it is like to be a refugee. www.playagainstalldodds.com/

Refugee Realities: a simulation event developed by Oxfam Australia that gets participants to step into the shoes of someone who has been forced to flee their home. www.oxfam.org.au/refugee/public/index.php

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⁵ To find out more about warehousing, see Frequently Asked Questions about Refugee Warehousing and the Campaign to End It. US Committee for Refugees. www.refugees.org/article.aspx?id=1296&rid=1179&subm=33&ssm=87&area=Investigate&UNHCR. 2016.
A Refugee Camp in the Heart of a City: project developed by Medicins San Frontiers that enables people to experience life in a refugee camp. [www.refugeecamp.org/home/](http://www.refugeecamp.org/home/)

**Journals:**

**Forced Migration Review** – Oxford University - [www.fmreview.org/](http://www.fmreview.org/)

Forced Migration Review (FMR) is published three times a year by the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University. FMR is available free of charge in print and online. Since it was launched in 1987 it has gained a global reputation as the most widely read publication on refugee and internal displacement issues.

**Refuge** – York University – [www.yorku.ca/refuge](http://www.yorku.ca/refuge)

Refuge is an interdisciplinary journal published two times a year by the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University in Toronto, Canada. It aims to provide a forum for discussion and critical reflection on refugee and forced migration issues and provides analytical, reflective, and probing articles from a wide range of disciplinary and regional perspectives.

**Participant Activities**

*The following questions and activities are included in the Participant’s Handbook for this unit.*

1. Visit the UNHCR website ([www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)) and spend some time looking at the resources it contains. Pay particular attention to the country pages.

2. As mentioned, Human Rights Law is also provides important protection tools for refugees. What is ‘Human Rights Law’ and what do you think some of the most important human rights treaties for refugees might be?

3. What is International Humanitarian Law and why is it relevant for refugees?

4. Which countries other than Australia assist UNHCR to resettle refugees?

5. Why do you think countries resettle refugees?

6. What do you think the consequences might be of the fact that only 1% of refugees are resettled each year?

7. What is ‘warehousing’ in the refugee context and where are the largest populations of warehoused refugees?

8. What are the consequences of warehousing?

9. If you were forced to leave your own country, what would your priorities be?

10. If you were forced to leave your own country, how would you like to be treated?
Topic 2: Australia’s Response to Forced Migration

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

**AIM:** To look in broad terms at how Australia, specifically the Australian government, responds to forced migration, beginning with the overall response then focus on how refugees and other forced migrants come to Australia.

In so doing, participants will acquire a conceptual framework that enables them to understand the operation of the Humanitarian Program and apply this knowledge in their work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole of government response to refugees and forced migration</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Humanitarian Program</td>
<td>Presentation supported by activity</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa categories</td>
<td>Presentation supported by activity</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of forced migration to Australia</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of entrants for resettlement to Australia</td>
<td>Presentation supported by activities</td>
<td>45 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.

**Important Definitions**

**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**

The finer points of the definition of ‘settlement’ will be discussed in Topic 3 but the key point of relevance here is that the word is typically used to describe things that happen in the post-arrival context – including the adaptation process through which refugees and other forced entrants go and the services available to them.
Whole of Government Response

There are many ways in which the Australian government seeks to address the issue of forced displacement. These include but are not limited to:

- working through the United Nations and with countries in our region to address the root causes of displacement;
- helping countries improve their governance and human rights observance through dialogue and training;
- providing humanitarian assistance to refugees through the overseas aid program;
- providing resettlement places;
- granting asylum (a protection visa) to people in Australia who fit the definition of a refugee.\(^7\)

The Humanitarian Program

Two of the ways in which Australia responds to refugees involve refugees coming to Australia and they are collectively referred to as the ‘Humanitarian Program’.

The Humanitarian Program is managed by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) and performs two key functions:

- it provides a **durable solution** to refugees and other especially vulnerable people overseas who have been determined to be in need of protection and for whom no other solution is viable. Such people are granted permanent visas overseas and then resettled in Australia under what is often referred to as the ‘offshore’ component of the Humanitarian Program;
- it provides **protection** to people who are already in Australia, have legitimate fears about returning to their country of origin and are determined to meet the definition of a refugee. This is often referred to as the ‘onshore’ component of the Humanitarian Program.

Australia has been resettling refugees and other forced migrants in significant numbers since the end of the Second World War. During this time, some 750,000 people have been resettled and they have come from many parts of the world:

- between 1947 and 1954 approximately 170,000 Eastern Europeans who had been displaced by the War came to Australia;
- from 1956 onwards, Hungarians began to arrive;
- the next major wave came from Czechoslovakia (as it was then called) following the Warsaw Pact Intervention in 1968;
- during the 1970s, refugees began arriving from Chile, Lebanon and Indochina;

during the 1980s the program diversified, with up to 40 nationalities represented, including significant numbers from Eastern Europe, Latin/Central America and the Middle East, while at the same time the inflow of refugees from Indochina continued;

the aftermath of the first Gulf War saw the caseload shift towards the Middle East in the early 1990s;

by the mid-1990s, however, the impact of the Balkan War was being felt and about half of the offshore entrants came from the Former Yugoslavia. This continued for a number of years;

the late 1990s and early 2000s saw another significant shift in the composition of the program. Whereas in the past, it was believed that most African refugees could be protected in countries of first asylum, this was no longer the case and UNHCR began seeking resettlement places for Africans in increasing numbers. By 2003-04, 71% of offshore entrants were from Africa;

by the middle of the 2000s, a number of factors led to another major change in the composition of the program. The need for resettlement places for Africans fell due to increased prospects for repatriation. At the same time there was an increase in the need for resettlement places for those displaced by conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan and refugees in Asia (especially those from Myanmar and Bhutan) for whom resettlement had only recently become a viable option;

by the end of the 2000s, the offshore program was characterised by an even distribution of places between Africa, the Middle East and Asia and this trend continued into the 2010s, though with the escalation of conflict in Syria and Iraq, the program composition shifted to reflect the need from this area.

Suggested Activity

Prepare a slide or handout of the table on the following page which shows the major entrant groups in the humanitarian program by decade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1940s</th>
<th>1950s</th>
<th>1960s</th>
<th>1970s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany, Austria, Poland and the Ukraine</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>Indochina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin America (Chile and El Salvador)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1980s</th>
<th>1990s</th>
<th>2000s</th>
<th>2010s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 40 nationalities including: Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Croatia)</td>
<td>Africa (initially Sudan then many countries)</td>
<td>Africa (DR Congo plus other countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos)</td>
<td>Middle East (especially Iraq)</td>
<td>Middle East (Iraq, Iran)</td>
<td>Middle East (Syria, Iraq, Iran)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>Bhutan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ask whether any of the participants know why these people had been forced to leave their country of origin.

You may wish to get the participants to do some research on this before the next class. The DIBP country profiles provide succinct background information, as does the UNSW publication, *Working with Refugees* (see References).

**Visa Categories**

All forced migrants residing permanently in Australia have a visa, the subclass of which can give you important clues as to the person’s background and mode of arrival. The most common visa classes for forced migrants are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa Subclass Number</th>
<th>Visa Name</th>
<th>People to Whom it is Issued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>Most have been identified by UNHCR and referred to Australia for resettlement. Must be a refugee and have a protection need that can only be met through resettlement. In some cases, those granted refugee visas have self identified or been referred to Australia through another channel. The needs of subclass 200 holders vary according to their background and circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>In Country Special Humanitarian</td>
<td>As the name suggests, this visa is granted to people still in their country of origin (i.e. they are not refugees). Most are identified by UNHCR or DIBP. Very few of these visas are granted. The lack of flight does not necessarily mean a lack of trauma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202</td>
<td>Special Humanitarian Program</td>
<td>Holders must have suffered substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of their human rights. They are not required to be refugees but in most cases are. There must also be a link to Australia in the form of a sponsor (proposer) who will be their main supporter after arrival. Their needs are similar to refugee visa entrants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203</td>
<td>Emergency Rescue</td>
<td>Cases identified by UNHCR and moved because the person is in imminent danger. Holders of this visa will have high levels of recent trauma and will have not had time to prepare for relocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204</td>
<td>Women at Risk</td>
<td>Cases usually identified by UNHCR and are typically either single women or female headed households and their dependents. They have been selected because of their vulnerability. There is a high probability that the principle entrant (and sometimes the dependents) will have experienced significant torture/trauma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>866</td>
<td>Permanent Protection (onshore)</td>
<td>Visa issued to those recognised as refugees by the Australian government after they sought asylum in Australia. In most cases these visas are issued to asylum seekers who arrived by plane and resided in the community while their claims were being examined. In cases where the visa was granted before 2013, the person might have arrived boat and experienced periods of destitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>785</td>
<td>Temporary Protection</td>
<td>Temporary visas issued from 2015 to person(s) who arrived by boat and was determined to be a refugee. See <a href="http://www.border.gov.au">www.border.gov.au</a> for more details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>790</td>
<td>Safe Haven Enterprise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The criteria used for the grant of a visa are set down in Australian law. Each applicant is individually assessed against these criteria which are designed to ensure that visas are granted to applicants with the most compelling need for resettlement.

In addition to meeting the criteria attached to each visa subclass, applicants must also undergo health and character checks to satisfy public interest criteria. When looking at the entry of forced migrants to Australia, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that some forced migrants arrive under the general migration program because they have been able to satisfy the criteria for grant of a family, business or skilled visa. While they might not be classified as ‘refugees’ for the purpose of migration, it does not mean they have not lived the refugee experience and do not share the needs of humanitarian program entrants.

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8 The red flag signals visa subclasses where it can be presumed that holders will have experienced high levels of trauma and will have complex settlement needs.

9 The health requirement applies to all applicants for humanitarian visas and any dependent family members included in their application. The health check generally involves an x-ray and medical examination and is intended to prevent risks to public health, reduce public expenditure on health and safeguard access to health services for Australians. Onshore applicants are just required to undergo a health check; offshore applicants are required to pass a health test (though the Minister for Immigration may decide to waive the health requirement in compelling circumstances).

10 The objective of the character checks is to prevent the entry of people who pose a threat to the community or to community harmony, or who pose a national security threat. Both onshore and offshore applicants are required to pass the character check.
Suggested Activity

When looking at the visa subclasses, ask the participants to identify the things they can learn about an entrant from the visa category alone. Then ask:

- Is it a given that this will be the case?
- How might knowledge of visa category help them to prepare for their work with an entrant?

Management of Forced Migration into Australia

As previously mentioned, it is the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) that is the federal government agency responsible for the management of immigration programs, including the Humanitarian Program.

The size and composition of the Humanitarian Program is determined each financial year (1 July – 30 June) by the government after a detailed process of consultation with:

- UNHCR about the numbers and caseloads for whom they are likely to seek resettlement places for in the coming year;
- other resettlement countries to ensure complementarity of their programs;
- the Refugee Council of Australia which consults widely with its constituents and prepares a detailed submission and with other relevant peak bodies and community agencies;
- the Australian community; this is done by way of a discussion paper that is made available on DIBP’s website and which invites input. In addition, letters and submissions received are considered and consultations are held during the year;
- other federal government agencies such as the Department of Foreign Affairs, The Department of Social Services and the Department of Health. This is to ensure they are able to provide necessary services;
- state and territory governments because they too provide services (in particular health, education and housing) required by refugees and humanitarian visa holders.

The number of Humanitarian Program visas granted varies from year to year. Visa grants over a 6 year period are shown in the table below.\textsuperscript{11} Up to date figures can be found on the DIBP website (www.border.gov.au/media).

\textsuperscript{11} Statistics from DIBP.
### Humanitarian Program Grants by Category: 2010-11 to 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refugee(^{13})</td>
<td>5,975</td>
<td>5,992</td>
<td>12,012</td>
<td>6,501</td>
<td>6,002</td>
<td>8,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Humanitarian(^{14})</td>
<td>2,966</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>4,515</td>
<td>5,007</td>
<td>7,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onshore Protection(^{15})</td>
<td>4,820</td>
<td>7,038</td>
<td>7,504</td>
<td>2,750</td>
<td>2,747</td>
<td>2,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other(^{16})</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>12,789</td>
<td>13,744</td>
<td>20,019</td>
<td>13,768</td>
<td>13,756</td>
<td>17,555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The composition of the program also varies from year to year, reflecting the resettlement needs at the time. The following table shows the top 10 entrants groups in 2014-15 and 2015-16: \(^{17}\)

#### 2014-15 and 2015-16 Offshore Humanitarian Visa Grants
**Top 10 Countries**

![Graph showing top 10 countries for offshore humanitarian visa grants]

**Application processing times** vary according to the circumstances of the country of residence, the complexity of the case and whether there are any health and character issues to be considered. DIBP service standards require that 75% of all offshore humanitarian lodgements are finalised within 12 months of lodgement.

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\(^{12}\) This includes visas granted as part of the additional allocation of 12,000 places for refugees from Syria and Iraq.

\(^{13}\) Visa subclasses 200, 201, 203 and 204.

\(^{14}\) Visa subclass 202.

\(^{15}\) Visa subclass 866.

\(^{16}\) This includes visas granted for a range of reasons such as for medical treatment or to enable resolution of status.

\(^{17}\) Statistics from DIBP.
The location in which an entrant settles is, to a large extent, determined by whether the entrant has a ‘link’ to Australia. The link could be a family member or friend or a group that has proposed (sponsored) the entrant. If such a link exists, the entrant will be resettled in the same location. At least 70% of entrants have some link to people in Australia.

If an entrant does not have a link, the Department of Immigration gives consideration to where would be the best location for the entrant according to their needs. For example:

- entrants with complex medical needs or who have experienced high levels of trauma are resettled close to specialist facilities;
- entrants from rural backgrounds might be directed to a regional centre which has a demonstrated capacity to provide appropriate services.

Humanitarian Program entrants are not compelled to remain in the place they were initially resettled. It is not uncommon for entrants to relocate at some stage after arrival. There are many reasons for this secondary movement. It might be because they have located a friend or family member living elsewhere; it might be because of better work opportunities or cheaper rent in a particular location; or it might be for any one a myriad of other reasons.

Travel costs of entrants with a refugee visa (visa subclasses 200, 201, 203 and 204) are paid by the Australian Government and travel is organised by the International Organisation for Migration. Entrants granted a Special Humanitarian Program visa (visa subclass 202) are responsible for their own travel costs. This usually involves their link in Australia (their ‘proposer’) either paying the fares or taking out a loan which the entrant will be responsible for repaying after arrival. The latter is by far the most common way this is done.

Preparation of Entrants for Resettlement

It is well recognised that the settlement outcomes of humanitarian entrants are enhanced if they begin to receive targeted support and assistance before they leave for Australia. There are two main ways in which this occurs:

The Australian Cultural Orientation Program

The Australian Cultural Orientation Program (AUSCO) is an orientation course for offshore entrants provided overseas and is usually delivered over 5 days. It gives an initial

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18 While entrants are not obliged to remain in the place they were initially settled, it is generally seen as undesirable if they relocate part way through the receipt of their initial settlement support package because they are not able to ‘double dip’ into services, e.g. if they have received their furniture package in one location, they cannot get another package in their new location.

19 The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental organisation (i.e. its governing body is made up of governments) which works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. Its principal activities include working to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, promoting international cooperation on migration issues, assisting in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and providing humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.

20 There are several no-interest loan schemes, including one run by IOM, that support the travel of humanitarian entrants to Australia.
introduction to various aspects of Australian life and culture, as well as practical information about the journey to Australia.

Further information about AUSCO can be found in the publication: \textit{Refugee and Humanitarian Issues} and in DIBP Factsheet 67, both on the DIBP website: www.border.gov.au.

**Suggested Activity**

Either in small groups or as a class activity, ask participants to imagine they have been accepted for resettlement in Burkina Faso.\footnote{This a French-speaking country in the central part of West Africa, chosen because of the improbability that participants will have heard of it or know anything about it – just as many humanitarian entrants know little or nothing about Australia.} Ask them to make a list of the things they want/need to know, highlighting those they feel are the most important.

**Pre-Departure Medical Screening**

Pre-departure Medical Screening (PDMS) is a voluntary health check usually undertaken about 3 days prior to travel. This is separate to the mandatory health check associated with visa grant and is intended to assess fitness to travel and identify any medical issues that might require prompt attention after arrival. If an entrant is assessed as not being fit to travel, this does not jeopardise their visa. The person will receive treatment and travel when determined to be fit to do so.

**Suggested Activity**

Before closing this session, it is relevant to reflect on the fact that while most people are excited about being chosen for resettlement, they can also have mixed emotions.

Divide the class into two groups – one with no more than three or four members and the other containing the majority of the members of the class.

Get the two groups to stand or sit facing each other.

Explain to the small group that they are the lucky ones who have been accepted for resettlement to Australia.

Explain to the large group that they are the people left behind. Point to particular members and tell them that they are the aunt/cousin/best friend of one of those chosen for resettlement.

Ask the two groups questions about how they are feeling at this time. The questions might include:

To the small group:

- How are you feeling about leaving?
- Is there anything/anyone you will miss?
- Are you feeling scared? If so, about what?\footnote{22}
What are you most looking forward to about leaving? ...

To the big group:

How are you feeling seeing these people who have what you want?
What do you hope/expect they might do for you once they are resettled?
How will you feel if they don’t contact/help you? ...

Finish this exercise by reminding participants that when humanitarian entrants arrive in Australia, they bring with them very mixed emotions, not all of which are positive. It is important that those working with new entrants recognise and respect their conflicted state.

References


Participant Activities

1. What are the two key functions of Australia’s Humanitarian Program?

2. Answer the following questions about humanitarian visas:

   i. If your client has been recognised as a refugee, what visa subclass(es) might s/he hold?

   ii. Which visa subclass(es) typically involve a referral from UNHCR?

   It is significant to note that many refugees say that the time they are most fearful for their safety is when they have been granted a visa to go to another country. Other refugees have been known to attack such people out of jealousy and/or to steal their identity.
iii. Which 2 visa subclasses should alert you to a high level of vulnerability?

iv. What is the main difference between a visa subclass 866 and the other visa subclasses?

v. What is the unique feature of a visa subclass 201?

3. Go to the DIBP website and find the answers to the following questions:

   i. How many Humanitarian program Visas were granted last financial year?

   ii. What were the top 5 countries of birth?

   iii. Are there any changes in the top 5 countries of birth compared to the previous year’s program?

   iv. Why do you think this is the case?

4. What is the mandate of the International Organisation for Migration (www.iom.int)?

5. What functions does the International Organisation for Migration provide to assist Australia’s Humanitarian Program? (Hint – there is more than one function)

6. What are the key objectives of the AUSCO program?

7. Why is it important for you, as a worker, to be aware of what entrants are taught in the AUSCO program?
## Topic 3: What is Settlement?

### TOPIC 3: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY

**AIM:** to ensure the participants understand the concept of settlement as it applies to forced migrants and are able to identify relevant settlement services and the principles that underpin their operation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition of settlement</td>
<td>Activity and trainer led discussion</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stages of settlement</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement needs</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs versus rights</td>
<td>This is provided as background information – for use in discussions if deemed appropriate and relevant to the participants</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators of settlement</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services available to new entrants</td>
<td>Presentation plus assignment of homework task</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of the community sector</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement services principles</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10 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.

### Important Note:

Prior to 2013, the Department of Immigration was responsible for both granting visas and for the provision of many of the specially targeted settlement services. From September 2013, these functions were split, with the **Department of Social Services (DSS)** taking over responsibility for both settlement policy and for the provision of the majority of these services.
Definition of Settlement

‘Settlement’ is a rather amorphous term that everyone uses but for which a simple definition is elusive. The Oxford Dictionary defines ‘settle’ as meaning, amongst other things, ‘to establish or become established in an abode or place or way of life’. But when you add the displacement that characterises the forced migration experience, the term ‘settlement’ takes on whole new dimensions.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) defines settlement as:

...the process of adjustment you experience as you become established and independent in Australia.²³

Further insight into DSS’s perceptions of settlement can be drawn from the following diagram that provides a conceptual framework for understanding settlement outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME:</th>
<th>SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SETTLEMENT DIMENSIONS:</td>
<td>Social Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English proficiency</td>
<td>Employment circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in education and training</td>
<td>Level of income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in community life (e.g. school, sports)</td>
<td>Level of debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic Attributes
Country of birth, gender, age, marital status, family status, location, years of schooling, work experience, length of time in Australia

It is relevant to note that the diagram includes both:

- **systemic indicators**, which are considered important for the design and targeting of government policies and programs; and
- **life outcome indicators** that are used to identify the issues that need to be addressed overall to achieve effective settlement outcomes.

These key settlement dimensions are interrelated and should not be considered in isolation in the achievement of successful settlement.

Another interesting definition of settlement comes from a Canadian agency providing services for migrants. It defines settlement as:

... 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.24

A further perspective comes from services providers. The Refugee Council of Australia asked people working in the sector what the word ‘settlement’ meant to them. To them, ‘settlement’ is:

'the point of balance where connection to the old country still exists but the refugee is able to function at the same level as a national in the community;’

'about refugees having the confidence and the knowledge to make the system work for them;’

'about being able to deal with the things that happen to you and be able to use the systems that exist;’

'when refugees feel comfortable enough to stand up for their rights;’

'underpinned by access and participation;’

'when people have a real sense of themselves ... being able to link where they are with where they have been;’

'about putting your roots into new soil;’

'a sense of contentment with belonging;’

'the end of turmoil - rehabilitation and recuperation;’

'about entering the ‘comfort zone’ - where they feel part of and understand the system;’

'about being able to ‘walk in and out’ (or ‘dream in and out’) of their own culture and the new culture;’

'the point at which you are ready to be buried in your new home;’

'when people cease to answer to the title of refugee and have another name for themselves’.25

One thing about which there appears to be very little doubt is that the emphasis has to be on empowering entrants and ensuring they become self-reliant. There is a strong view that the welfare model is a thing of the past and that there needs to be a model that builds on continuous settlement achievements through the promotion of independence.

25 Direct quotes from the focus groups as reported in Refugee Settlement in Australia: Views from the Community Sector. RCOA. 2001.
There is less agreement, however, about whether ‘settlement’ is a point that can be reached or a process that will continue throughout the person’s life. It is well recognised that some forced migrants might feel ‘settled’ but then have something happen to them years later that reopens doors to their past experiences. In many ways the debate about whether there should be time period for settlement is more about eligibility for specialist services than about how people ‘feel’. Most specialist services are targeted at refugees and other forced migrants within their first five years and there is an expectation that mainstream services will be able to meet their needs thereafter.

**Suggested Activity**

Get the participants to work in small groups to come up with an agreed definition of settlement which they will then write on paper/on the board. Discuss the definitions, trying to identify any common elements and/or divergent views.

Present the DSS definition and some of the other definitions included above. Compare and contrast these to their definitions.

**Stages of Settlement**

There is wide acceptance of the notion that refugees and other forced migrants go through various stages as they adapt to life in their new country. Different authors give the stages different names but essentially they describe the same process.

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (in information Sheet 14, 2006) presents the phases of adjustment in a graphical form. This graph highlights three important aspects of the adjustment process:

- There are broad trends in the way entrants feel about their new life and these change over time.
- The emotional journey of an entrant (as depicted by the wavy line) is much more like a roller coaster than a steady progression.
- If entrants receive appropriate support in a timely manner, they will move towards integration into their new community. If they are not supported, there is a chance that they will end up being marginalised.
UNHCR describes the stages of settlement in a different way, using different terminology:

### The Process of Adapting to a New Country

Despite diversity among refugees and the countries in which they settle, research suggests that the process of adapting to a new country is very similar for most individuals. Four stages can be discerned and are presented in a necessarily simplified form below.

In practice, the process for individuals is not a linear one. Rather, most will move back and forward and there may be times when reactions lie somewhere between the stages.

Settlement support will be most important in the confrontation and adjustment stages. These are not only stressful points in the resettlement process, but are stages at which intervention can help to ensure a positive outcome.

The time involved in adaptation will differ depending on the characteristics of individual resettled refugees, their past experiences and factors in the resettlement environment.

#### The Honeymoon Stage

This occurs prior to arrival, while en-route and immediately after arrival.

Depending on their individual circumstances resettled refugees may have extreme positive or negative reactions (e.g. euphoria, excitement, thankfulness or exhaustion and anxiety). They may cling to unrealistic ideas about the receiving society as a survival mechanism (i.e. to avoid facing challenges they are not yet ready to handle). Physical symptoms are common (e.g. sleep problems and reaction to climatic and dietary change; memory loss and poor concentration).

#### Confrontation

Confrontation occurs as newcomers begin to interact with and attempt to come to terms with the receiving society (e.g. finding housing and employment). Many previously held assumptions about self and others may be shattered at this time and newcomers may be forced to re-evaluate their perceptions, values and identity. Common responses include frustration, dissatisfaction, embarrassment, fear, anger, guilt, nostalgia and irritability. It is not uncommon for newcomers to attribute complex issues to singular causes such as unemployment or separation from family members.

#### Adjustment

Adjustment occurs as newcomers begin to face the daily reality of living in the receiving society. At this time they develop an increased awareness that established behavioural patterns and coping mechanisms do not work in their new situation. Feelings of failure and self-doubt may result.

Commonly, newcomers respond by developing new coping styles and behavioural patterns. However, others may react to these challenges with responses such as dependency on others, or escapism (e.g. addiction). Periodic withdrawal to gain strength and courage from self-reflection are not uncommon during this stage.

#### Reconstruction

In this final stage, newcomers build on their inner strength and begin to feel more comfortable in their new society. They gain a sense of control over their lives in their new situation and begin to feel attached to friends, activities and objects in their new country.

Irrespective of how the stages are presented, there are is agreement that there are stages and that there is no set time frame for people to move through the stages. Also, just as with the well-recognised ‘Stages of Grieving’, it is not predestined that an individual will progress through all of the stages or how long it will take before s/he progresses to the next stage.

26 Adapted from UNHCR Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees. 2002.
One of the challenging realities of humanitarian settlement is that within one family, individuals will move through the stages at different rates. There are many common scenarios where differential rates of settlement lead to tensions within the home, for example:

- where the younger members adapt more quickly than their parents, particularly if one or more parent is still grieving for that which has been lost;

- where the wife gets a job (i.e. is participating) and the husband remains unemployed, particularly where there is a strong cultural imperative for the man to be providing for his family;

- where a grandparent is isolated and has no community support and the younger generations are too busy with jobs/school to give the care and attention s/he expects.

These issues are exacerbated in many instances by cultural differences (some cultures have a strong community focus whereas contemporary Australian culture is very much focused on the individual) and by the absence of extended families (in which the various members have clearly defined roles).

**Suggested Activity**

Give each participant a piece of blank paper. Ask them to draw an ‘x’ and ‘y’ axis on the paper and label the x axis ‘Time in Australia’ and the y axis ‘Level of Satisfaction’:

![Graph](image)

Ask the participants to imagine they are a forced migrant who has arrived in Australia. Then ask them to think about how they are feeling when they first arrive, after being here for one week, after one month, after 6 months and after two years. Get them to plot this on their graph.

Discuss the results and then compare and contrast them to the graph on the previous page and what you have learnt about the stages of adaptation from the UNHCR Table (above).

Also highlight:

- the fact that each person’s path is very different (you might wish to compare some of the class graphs to emphasise this);
- that differences in rate of adaptation within a family can cause tensions within the family;
- the importance of assessing a client’s ‘mood’ each time they are seen. The fact that they were happy and confident one week does not mean that they will be feeling the same way the following week.
**Settlement Needs**

You might recall the activity in Topic 1 which looked at the differences between forced migrants and migrants. These differences have an impact on their settlement needs.

While forced migrants share many of the settlement needs of all migrants, for example they will need somewhere to live, some form of income etc, they also have needs that are additional to and distinct from those of voluntary migrants, not least because of:

- the trauma they have experienced;
- their (often lengthy) periods of deprivation since leaving their country of origin;
- the lack of control they have had (and often still have) over their lives;
- their fear and/or distrust of government, the military and the police;
- their lack of financial resources and belongings.

Often when people think about the needs of forced migrants, they think in terms of very practical things, forgetting that there is a parallel and equally important set of needs – those that relate to how the entrant feels, thinks and reacts:

<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>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>

It is vitally important that those responsible for meeting refugees’ practical needs recognise that they also have a responsibility to recognise and meet their emotional needs.

**Suggested Activity**

Suggest to the participants that they are responsible for finding suitable accommodation for this newly arrived Woman at Risk entrant and her 4 young children.
Either as a class exercise or in small groups, get the participants to discuss how they can best ensure that her emotional needs are considered when they are trying to secure accommodation ... in so doing pointing out that this exercise takes place in a location where rental properties are available and affordable.

The sort of things that could be discussed include:

- establishing what would make the woman feel safe, e.g.:
  - being on the ground floor ‘so she can escape if she feels threatened’ or on the top floor ‘so no one can climb in’; and/or
  - being somewhere noisy so that comfort can be drawn from the fact that people are close by or being somewhere quiet so that she is not frightened by every sound;
- giving her a choice of properties;
- trying to secure a longer term lease;
- putting her in touch with local volunteers who can help her secure additional items (pictures, table cloths etc) that will make the property more homely;
- making sure she is confident about using the appliances within the home;
- ensuring she is able to get to the services she needs and make use public transport if required;
- encouraging her to introduce herself to the neighbours (or facilitating this) so she does not feel so isolated; etc.

**Needs versus Rights**

Thus far we have looked at ‘settlement needs’ because this is the current policy framework and the terminology most commonly used ‘in the industry’. From your perspective as a trainer, it is possibly relevant for you to note that a ‘needs-based approach’ is not the only paradigm and that increasingly this is being challenged by those advocating a ‘rights based approach’. It is up to you (and possibly the profile of the students) as to whether you choose to mention this debate in class.

In a nutshell, a rights-based approach is underpinned by the premise that everybody has certain fundamental rights (as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the various human rights treaties) and the state has a responsibility to ensure that people are able to enjoy these rights. The key difference between this and a needs-based approach is that the focus on need implies that the person with the need is a burden or drain on the State ... more so than ‘less needy’ people ... and that it is only through the benevolence of the State that the need is met. It is argued that this allows people with need to be perceived as being a ‘problem’ and both perpetuates the notion of assistance being ‘charity’ and also ‘optional’. A rights-based approach turns this around, suggesting that people are entitled to have a legitimate expectation that their particular needs should be met.
Indicators of Settlement

As previously mentioned, there are differing views about when and whether settlement can be deemed to have occurred. Simplistically, on one side of the argument is the view that settlement should be defined by a person’s length of residence and on the other is the contention that settlement involves achieving certain objectives. The latter school of thought is gaining wider acceptance over time and is now reflected in DSS policy.

The acceptance of the position that settlement should be linked to achieving certain objectives then requires that there be a set of quantifiable indicators that can be used to measure how well entrants are faring. Opinions on what these indicators should be have changed over time and differ from country to country. According to DSS27 there are four key indicators of settlement: Social participation, Economic well-being, Independence (or ‘agency’) and Personal well-being.

All four are seen as closely interlinked components of the same system. To be effectively settled, a person needs to score well in all four categories.

The things that are used to measure settlement include but are not limited to the following:28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement Indicators</th>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social participation</td>
<td>- English proficiency&lt;br&gt;- Participation in education and training&lt;br&gt;- Participation in community life (school, volunteer work, faith community, sporting or recreational group etc)&lt;br&gt;- Citizenship (or intention to become a citizen)&lt;br&gt;- Amount of community acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic well-being</td>
<td>- Employment&lt;br&gt;- Level of income&lt;br&gt;- Job satisfaction&lt;br&gt;- Satisfaction with accommodation&lt;br&gt;- Level of debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence ('agency')</td>
<td>- Ability to make choices (about own life)&lt;br&gt;- Ability to gain access to and make use of community and government services&lt;br&gt;- A reliable source of income (from employment or Centrelink)&lt;br&gt;- Drivers licence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal well being</td>
<td>- Physical health&lt;br&gt;- Mental health&lt;br&gt;- Level of personal confidence&lt;br&gt;- Sense of safety&lt;br&gt;- Sense of connection to Australia&lt;br&gt;- Level of self esteem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 Department of Social Services Policy Documents.
28 Adapted from Department of Social Services Policy Documents.
Suggested Activity

Brainstorm with the participants what things they would look for if they were asked to assess a person’s settlement against each of the indicators set out in the table above.

Services Available to New Entrants

Historical Context

It is not intended that this historical section form the basis of classroom instruction. Rather it is included as background information to provide a context for the current services and also to enable you to respond to questions and/or add some flavour to classroom discussions.

The land now known as Australia has been a land of diversity for its entire history of human habitation. The first arrivals came more than 40,000 years ago and lived in distinct tribal groups, with different languages and customs. First Australians are often referred to by the collective name ‘Australian Aborigines’ but most will identify themselves according to their tribal group.

Diversity continued after the arrival of European settlers. While very much dominated by British influence, from its very beginning the new colony was made up of people from different national and religious backgrounds. While it began its life as a penal colony, it was not long before many free settlers were attracted to the opportunities that the new colony had to offer.

Almost from the outset, and continuously since then, government agencies have been involved in the provision of services aimed at assisting the new arrivals. In the 19th Century the state governments also introduced a variety of schemes to attract free settlers. These included offering subsidised passage and initial support (including accommodation).

There were, however, many gaps in the services provided and from the early days of the colony, community based support also played an important role in assisting new arrivals. One of the best-remembered characters from the early 19th Century is Caroline Chisholm who was very concerned about the plight of immigrant women in Sydney and established support programs that assisted over 11,000 people.

The first large scale diversion from European settlement came during the gold rush in the 1850s. Large numbers of Chinese came in to work on or associated with the goldfields, establishing a significant Asian presence in the colony. By the end of the 19th Century, they had been joined by other Asian groups (including the Afghan cameleers) and Pacific Islanders. The latter part of the 19th Century also saw a diversification of the origins of the European migrants who were settling in Australia.

The growth in cultural diversity was significantly curtailed when, as one of the first acts of the newly formed Federal Government of Australia, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 was passed. This Act, the enactment of which was referred to as the ‘White

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29 From Refugee Settlement in Australia: Views from the Community Sector. Written by Margaret Piper for the Refugee Council of Australia. April 2001

30 Until Federation on 1st January 1901, Australia was a collection of separately governed states.
Australia Policy’, effectively limited migration to British citizens during the first half of the 20th Century, being relaxed only to allow resettlement of some European refugees in the lead up to the Second World War.

The Department of Immigration was established in 1945 to promote migration to Australia. In the immediate post-war period, many of those who came were displaced persons, predominantly from Eastern Europe. This was followed up with resettlement of refugees from first Hungary and then Czechoslovakia. The migration program also changed at this time, with migrants being sought from many parts of Europe to work on large capital work projects such as the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

At this time there was an expectation that migrants and refugees would readily assimilate into the Australian way of life. There was little understanding that it was unrealistic to expect the arrivals to dissociate themselves from their cultural or linguistic backgrounds or that those from refugee backgrounds would need any specialist or additional support. This realisation came slowly and incrementally over the next 50 years.

Arrivals in the post-war period (both migrants and refugees) were accommodated in hostels and expected to take any employment that was available. The first adult English classes were delivered in hostels in 1947, a first step towards the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) which operates today.

An Immigration Advisory Council was also established in 1947 to advise on migrant settlement issues. 1950 saw the establishment of Good Neighbour Councils which coordinated the efforts of volunteers from the community who welcomed the new arrivals and gave an undertaking to assist them with their settlement. The Good Neighbour Councils are remembered with great affection by many of refugees who arrived at this time and they largely set the model for the volunteer support that now underpins settlement service delivery.

The White Australia Policy began to be wound back in 1966 when restrictions on immigration were repealed and it was finally buried in 1973 when a non-discriminatory immigration policy was introduced. As increasing numbers of migrants and refugees from non-English speaking backgrounds were accepted into Australia, the need for expanded language and other support services became evident. A number of important services which underpin today’s settlement support program were established by the Government in the late 1960s and the 1970s. These included:

- the Grant in Aid scheme, which was established in 1968 to provide grants to voluntary agencies to develop welfare services to migrants and refugees. The Grant in Aid scheme was the fore-runner to today’s Settlement Grants Program (SGP);

- the Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS), which was set up in 1973 to provide interpreters in situations where face to face interpreters were not available;\(^{31}\)

- the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), which was set up in 1977 to promote the establishment of additional interpreting services and to establish national standards in this area. NAATI is now the main accreditation body for interpreters;

- the introduction in 1978 of programs to encourage the employment of bilingual staff in Commonwealth Government departments;

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\(^{31}\) This was followed up in the 1980s when the Commonwealth funded Telephone Interpreter Service was expanded, on-site interpreter services became more available and Commonwealth translation services were also expanded.
• the establishment of the first of the specialist **Migrant Resource Centres** (MRCs) in 1978;

• the introduction by the Government in 1979 of the **Community Refugee Settlement Scheme** (CRSS) that coordinated the provision of volunteer assistance to newly arrived refugees until the late 1990s;

• the establishment in each state and territory in 1978 and 1979 of **Migrant Settlement Councils** to coordinate the activities of government and voluntary bodies involved in the provision of settlement services.

Possibly the only major service area that did not have its genesis at this time was the network of torture and trauma counselling services that began a decade later.

This evolution of service delivery was also accompanied by a major policy shift. There was a movement away from the assimilationist philosophy that had hitherto underpinned Government policy towards acceptance of cultural and linguistic pluralism associated with multiculturalism.

Also relevant was the flow on to Australia of the ‘people’s movement’ that began in the United States of America in the 1960s. This saw ordinary people demanding to have a say in government policy and resource allocation. In this sector, it was evidenced by increased consultation with ethnic communities to define needs and, with the intake of South East Asian refugees after 1975, increased awareness of the need for settlement services that could cater for the significant needs and diversity of the entrant groups.

This culminated in the **Galbally Committee of Inquiry into Post Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants** in 1977 and the subsequent **Galbally Report** which adopted four guiding principles for programs and services for refugees and migrants:

i. *All members of society must have equal opportunity to realise their full potential and must have equal access to programs and services.*

ii. *Every person shall be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage and should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures.*

iii. *Needs of migrants*\(^{32}\) *should, in general, be met by programs and services available to the whole community but special services and programs are necessary at present to ensure equity of access and provision.*

iv. *Services and programs should be designed and operated in full consultation with clients, and self-help should be encouraged as much as possible with a view to helping migrants to become self-reliant quickly.*\(^{33}\)

The Galbally Report established a policy context for the provision of services to migrants and refugees. Subsequent inquiries have largely affirmed Galbally’s recommendations, refining them further with the conclusion that settlement services should be confined to the specific settlement needs of refugees and migrants, while general needs should be met by mainstream services supporting new entrants through the deliberate introduction of **access** and **equity** measures. Over the years, these two principles were progressively incorporated into policy and legislation at federal, state and local state government levels.

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\(^{32}\) Where the term ‘migrant’ is used in this case, it also covers people from refugee background.

In 1991 the National Integrated Settlement Strategy was initiated as a joint initiative of federal, state and local government to coordinate government agencies at all levels which were involved in settlement related activities. This was backed up by the establishment of settlement planning committees in each state and territory and the formation of the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council (RRAC) that brought together settlement experts from the community sector initially to advise the Minister for Immigration on refugee settlement issues. RRAC now provides this advice to the Minister for Social Services and the Parliamentary Secretary.

Out of recognition that equitable participation in society cannot be achieved by goodwill alone, the Australian Government then launched the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society in 1998. The Charter required that all Government agencies take into consideration the needs of people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the planning and delivery of their services. It was based on the principle of ensuring that all people have equal access to services and can expect equal outcomes from them, irrespective of their background. Ways to achieve this included, for example, ensuring that client information is translated into different languages, interpreters or bilingual staff are provided to communicate with clients if required, and that staff receive cross-cultural training. The Charter applied not only to the mainstream Government agencies themselves but also to any community agencies or private sector organisations they funded.

### Service Principles of the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society

- **Access**: government services should be available to everyone who is entitled to them and should be free of any form of discrimination, irrespective of a person’s country of birth, language, culture or religion.
- **Equity**: government services should be developed and delivered on the basis of fair treatment of clients who are eligible to receive them.
- **Communication**: government service providers should use strategies to inform eligible clients of services and their entitlements and how they can obtain them. Providers should also consult with their clients regularly about the adequacy, design and standard of government services.
- **Responsiveness**: government services should be responsive to the needs and requirements of clients from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and responsive as far as practicable to the particular circumstances of individuals.
- **Effectiveness**: government service providers should be ‘results oriented’, focused on meeting the needs of clients from all backgrounds.
- **Efficiency**: Government service providers should optimise the use of available public resources through a user-responsive approach to service delivery which meets the needs of clients.
- **Accountability**: government service providers should have a reporting mechanism in place that ensures they are accountable for implanting Charter objectives for clients.

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In 2007, the Charter was replaced by a new strategy, Accessible Government Services for All (AGSFA). This framework was adopted to promote fairness and responsiveness in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of government services in a culturally diverse society. In 2008, AGSFA reverted to the Access and Equity name, however, the strategy remained the same.

2014 saw the adoption by of the National Settlement Framework. This is a high level structural blueprint for the three tiers of government (Commonwealth, State/Territory and Local) to work in partnership to plan effective delivery of services for migrants and humanitarian entrants. The Framework sets out priority areas for the three tiers of government to engage and collaborate on. These are:

- Language Services
- Education and Training
- Health and Wellbeing
- Civic Participation
- Justice

- Employment
- Housing
- Transport
- Family and Social Support

Under the framework, the three tiers of government commit to:

1. Planning: by creating supportive collaborative settlement planning structures and processes, including information-sharing.
2. Delivery: by supporting coordinated client-centric services eliminating gaps and duplications.
3. Evaluation and review: by developing a robust evidence base for assessing and better understanding settlement service delivery and outcomes.

The Framework complements existing policy and does not override existing legislation, programs or initiatives.

It is probable that new initiatives will emerge over time. When teaching this unit, be sure to check the relevant websites to ensure you have current information. This being said, it is important to recognise that successive Australian Governments have held firm to their commitment to provide resettlement opportunities to refugees and other forced migrants and there has also been bipartisan support for the provision of high quality services. There is official recognition that Humanitarian Program entrants will have needs additional to and distinct from other groups of migrants and will have a continuing need for assistance from both government and the community sector for some time. To accommodate this, the Government funds additional support programs for humanitarian entrants over and above the general settlement services.

The Current Situation

It is important to bear in mind when teaching this section is that while the Australian Government’s response to refugees is periodically challenged:

- most criticism relates to the management of the onshore program (specifically to border protection measures and the treatment of asylum seekers);
- the variety and quality of settlement services provided to refugees and other forced migrants is unmatched anywhere in the world. While all resettlement countries provide some post-arrival support, in many cases this is limited and conditional. The country that is arguably closest to Australia in terms of settlement support is Canada, though
their equivalent of the Special Humanitarian Program (the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program) requires sponsors to cover all costs for the entrant in the first 12 months (there is no entitlement to the Canadian equivalent of Centrelink and Medicare) and to provide all settlement support.

It is also important to recognise that refugees and other forced migrants receive support from a wide range of sources including:

- Department of Social Services (DSS) funded agencies;
- 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.

As the diagram below shows, the reality on the ground is that there is considerable overlap, for example, a settlement support agency might be in receipt of project funding from DSS as well as other government agencies will seek funding from other sources for supplementary programs and will make active use of volunteers.

The following table outlines some of the key programs through which services for refugees and other forced migrants 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 Services (HSS)</td>
<td>Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex Case Support Program (CCS)</td>
<td>Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Services Program (SSP)</td>
<td>English as a Second Language Program (ESL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHM) Program</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 other forced migrants have the same entitlements to mainstream services as all other permanent residents and citizens of Australia, including to:

- Centrelink
- Medicare
- Job Active
- Public housing and community housing
- Family support programs
- Youth programs
- Aged care
- Primary, secondary and tertiary education
- Sport and recreation programs etc.

Up to date information about DSS-funded programs can be obtained from the DSS website: [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au) and information about other key settlement programs can be found on as follows:

Torture and Trauma Counselling Services:


Refugee Health:

- NT: [www.gpntn.org.au](http://www.gpntn.org.au)

**Suggested Activity (Homework)**

Assign participants the task of finding out about the specialist settlement programs in the box above and be prepared to report back to class at the beginning of the next session.

It is relevant to note that the response of federal government agencies is underpinned by the **Social Inclusion Agenda** which was launched in 2009. The objective of the Social Inclusion Agenda is to ensure that the policy and programs of government agencies are designed, developed, coordinated and delivered in a way that meets the needs of the whole population – especially disadvantaged members within it. Recently arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants have been identified as a disadvantaged group. For more information on Social Inclusion Agenda go to:


State and Territory governments also play an important role in planning and service delivery. See:

- [www.multicultural.qld.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.qld.gov.au)
The Role of the Community Sector

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

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

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

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.

As previously mentioned, government funding (particularly but not exclusively from DSS) is very important for this sector. Some community agencies do not receive any government assistance (in large part as the result of a conscious decision to retain independence). Many others balance government funding with funding from their constituency and/or from fundraising.

Between them, the community sector agencies, volunteers and proposers provide most of the key services both in areas specific to humanitarian entrants and also those available to all migrants. These include but are not limited to:

- meeting entrants at the airport and helping them settle into their initial accommodation;
- giving initial orientation to the area and making sure the entrants have completed the necessary formalities (opened a bank account, registered for social security, enrolled their children in schools etc);
- assisting the entrants to gain access to services that will meet their various needs eg language instruction, housing, education, employment, health care etc;
- providing basic household goods; and
- providing an essential link between the entrant and their new country.

It is recognised that if service delivery is to function efficiently, there must be liaison between the policy/funding bodies and those who are providing the services. This occurs at many levels, from the specific project level to the policy level. Each state and territory has forums that provide opportunities for community agencies to discuss program
operation with the relevant government agencies. At the national level, peak non-government organisations (NGOs) meet with both the Department of Immigration and with Centrelink on a regular basis. As previously mentioned, there is also a committee which advises the Minister for Social Services on settlement issues (the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council).

**Settlement Service Principles**

In September 2009, the then Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services delivered a key speech in Brisbane outlining the vision for a new era in settlement service delivery.

The speech emphasised the importance of strengthening the current flexible client-centred approach to case management; tailoring case management to individual needs; developing and cultivating a path to education and employment; strengthening onshore cultural orientation; focusing on skill development and competency-based learning rather than time-based service delivery; increasing the focus on addressing the needs of youth; developing more effective links to other settlement and community programs; and promoting stronger connections with community supports such as ethnic organisations, and recreation and social groups. He concluded by emphasising the importance of the settlement program being **client-centred, flexible and adaptable**.

This vision underpinned the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) Program, details of which were released in March 2010. The HSS was introduced to replace the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy under which initial settlement support had been delivered since 2000.

The HSS Principles are worth studying. While they apply specifically to services delivered under the HSS Program, it can be argued that they constitute a sound set of principles which should guide all settlement service delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humanitarian Settlement Services Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Respect the human worth and dignity of Clients and their cultural and religious diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Protect the health and wellbeing of Clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Ensure Clients contribute to decisions that affect them and have influence over their settlement pathways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Deliver Services flexibly through a tailored case management approach which prioritises need and early intervention strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Give particular attention to the needs of children and young people as they are of vital concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Ensure Services build on individual Client strengths and promote Client capability and independence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Work collaboratively with other community and government agencies in the best interests of the Client.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Deliver Services to a high standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Be accountable to the users of Services and the Australian government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SCOA’s Settlement Service Standards

In May 2016, the Settlement Council of Australia launched its National Settlement Services Outcomes Standards. These are the culmination of an extensive round of consultation within the sector and aim to:

- ensure consistency and the maintenance of high quality settlement services across Australia;
- encourage and stimulate best practice and promote a culture of continuous improvement;
- strengthen service delivery, client outcomes and impact;
- provide a reference point for organisations to use in periodic reviews of service delivery;
- provide the impetus for capacity building within agencies and the sector more broadly.

The Standards are aligned with the Government’s National Settlement Framework (see page 48) and the Settlement Services Principles (see above). They are also intended to reflect human rights principles and a client-centred approach.

SCOA’s Standards are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education and Training</td>
<td>Education and training pathways are available and accessible to new arrival communities and have an evidence base of sustainable outcomes. The outcome standard recognises that linkages with education and training pathways are a critical component of an integrated settlement services system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Settlement services, employers and employment services work collaboratively to ensure sustainable workplace participation. The outcome standard recognises that barriers to employment differ amongst the diverse client groups accessing settlement services. Accordingly, services must be responsive, diverse, sustainable and effective in ensuring meaningful employment outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellbeing</td>
<td>Settlement services clients are engaged through effective and responsive primary prevention and early intervention initiatives that encourage health and wellbeing. This outcome standard builds the capability of settlement service providers to embed health and wellbeing as an underpinning feature across service system level and practice delivery. The standard reflects recognition that settlement services clients have been exposed to factors that present high risk around health and wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Appropriate, affordable and long term housing is available within reasonable proximity of social and community supports and employment opportunities. This outcome standard recognises that access to appropriate and affordable housing directly impacts outcomes of all other priority areas set out in the National Settlement Services Outcomes Standards. Furthermore, newly arrived communities are at high risk of homelessness and exploitation in the rental market.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language Services
Translating and interpreting services are available and accessible in various contexts. This outcome standard recognises that language services are an integral feature in ensuring settlement services’ clients are able to access the information and services they need to fully participate in the community and experience positive settlement outcomes.

Transport
Affordable transport options are available to facilitate social and economic participation. This outcome standard recognises that mobility of newly arrived communities through transport can impact on their capacity for civil participation. Transport is a key tool to facilitate access to services and employment and can have an impact on health and wellbeing.

Civic Participation
Newly arrived communities are able to effectively engage in the Australian community and exercise their individual and collective rights under the law. This outcome standard recognises the role that settlement service providers play in engaging and supporting migrant and new arrival communities to achieve a level of independence that facilitates effective civic participation. It encompasses efforts that promote cultural and national identity, encourage civic participation and foster contributions to the broader Australian society.

Family and Social Support
Newly arrived communities are supported to establish and maintain meaningful social and family relationships during settlement. This outcome standard recognises the vulnerabilities families are exposed to within the settlement process and ensures the settlement sector contributes to minimising these vulnerabilities through efforts that offer support around the particular needs of children, youth, women and men.

Justice
Newly arrived communities have access to timely and relevant legal information and advice in their own language. This outcome standard recognises the challenges migrants and new arrivals face in understanding the intricacies of Australia's legal and justice systems and the role that the settlement sector plays in minimising barriers to access. It supports legal literacy as a key aspect of successful settlement that enables migrants and new arrivals to engage economically, socially and culturally in Australian society.

Underpinning each of these standards is a set of indicators.
See www.scoa.org.au for more details.

References:


Good Starts for Recently Arrived Youth with Refugee Backgrounds: promoting well-being in the first three years of settlement in Australia. Sandy Gifford, Ignacio Correa-Velez and Robyn Sampson. La Trobe Refugee Research Centre. 2009.


**Participant Activities**

1. Write your own definition of ‘settlement’.

2. Why have you chosen to include the things you did?

3. Find the UNHCR Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees (2002) on the UNHCR website (www.unhcr.org) and read Chapter 1.3.

4. What are the key ways in which UNHCR’s depiction of the Stages of Settlement (in Chapter 1.3. of the UNHCR Handbook) differ to those in the Phases of Adjustment graph in this section? Comment on the significance of these differences.

5. What are the 7 Service Principles of the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society?

6. Of these Service Principles, which two are mentioned most often in the context of service delivery and what do they mean?

7. You will have noted that there is also a different set of service principles – one that relates specifically to work with humanitarian entrants (the Humanitarian Settlement Service Principles included above). What are 4 key things that distinguish this from the more general principles in the Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society?
8. Choose one of the practical settlement needs shown in the table in this section. Explain how you would go about meeting this need in a way that ensured that as many of the emotional needs as possible can also be met.

9. Select one or more of the Commonwealth Government agencies that provides services for refugees – preferably one you don’t know much about. Go to their website and find out about their programs.

10. What do you think the main roles of the peak non-government agencies in the settlement sector should be?
Topic 4: The Impact of Forced Migration on Settlement

**TOPIC 4: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY**

**AIM:** to give participants an appreciation of the various ways forced migration affects the settlement process and to equip them with insights and skills that will mitigate their worst effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework from Session 3</td>
<td>Discussion of findings</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to topic</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing gender roles</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges faced by families</td>
<td>Presentation supported by activity</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torture and trauma</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of obsolete survival strategies</td>
<td>Presentation supported by discussion-based 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.

As previously mentioned, forced migration is very different to voluntary migration where people have not only made a free and conscious decision to move, they have also had the opportunity to make plans, pack belongings, say goodbye etc.

The circumstances of forced migration are such that they can have a profound impact on those who have experienced it. The following table from UNHCR gives an overview of some of the stressors and the possible personal and emotional consequences of these.
### Potential Sources of Stress
- ongoing danger in country-of-origin
- continuing separation from family members
- lack of understanding/hostility on the part of government officials
- injustices
- minority status in a dominant culture
- limited community support networks
- prejudice and hostility on grounds of ethnicity, race, religion
- limited access to cultural and religious institutions
- poor social status
- gender role and status adjustment
- intergenerational adjustment
- unemployment
- underemployment
- difficulties in accessing education and health care
- insecure housing
- new and unfamiliar environment
- lack of proficiency in the language of the receiving society

### Possible Personal and Emotional Consequences
- fear and anxiety
- loss of trust
- grief
- loss of family support
- guilt
- loss of a sense of belonging
- cultural, racial or religious integrity undermined
- identity undermined
- lack/loss of social support
- family conflict and tension
- fear about the future and of not coping
- altered capacity to plan the future
- social and economic dependency
- poor health
- substance abuse

### Source: UNHCR Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees 2002

As you can see, many stressors and their consequences are included in this table and they are discussed in detail in the UNHCR Handbook.

Clearly there is too much to cover in detail in class so it is suggested that after presenting an overview, you concentrate on just a few issues. You might wish to focus on the issues identified below or you could select issues of particular interest to you.

Further, it is important to be mindful that the notes below do not purport to be anything other than a brief and necessarily simplistic introduction to a range of complex issues. The references provide guidance as to where more detailed information can be found.

### Changing Gender Roles

Gender roles in Australia are not nearly as clearly defined as they used to be. Both in the home and the workforce, gender roles have changed over time and, by and large, the population has accepted these changes. It is no longer seen as unusual for men to:
- cook, clean and undertake other chores at home;
- take time off to care for children while the woman goes out to work;
- report to women in the workplace; etc.

And for women to:
- be able to make the choice about when or even if they have children;
- pursue a career;
- expect to take an equal role in decision making about things concerning the family; etc.
We are so used to such things now it is easy to forget that it was not always like this and that in many parts of the world the things we take for granted are seen as highly irregular.

Many refugees and forced migrants come from countries where gender roles are far more rigidly defined. While there are significant cultural differences and also differences within entrant communities, it is commonplace:

- for men to see themselves as the undisputed head of the household. This entails being the provider and the decision maker, as well as the person to whom other family members defer. The man is also the person who expects to interact with the outside world on behalf of the family;
- for women’s roles to be defined as that of home-maker and mother. Other roles are subservient to this and there is an expectation that she will respect the wishes of her husband/father and ensure her children do likewise. In many cultures she will have had little experience interacting with people outside her extended family.

Despite having been alerted to the fact that things are done differently in Australia, many entrants:

- find it difficult to come to terms with behaviours and attitudes that run counter to all they have ever known;
- are reluctant to embrace the positive aspects of gender equality because it is hard for them to recognise that by doing so, they are not discarding their culture and identity.

Exacerbating the problem in many entrant families is that, in some instances, women find adjusting to life in Australia easier than men. Possible reasons for this include the fact that it is easier for a woman to pick up the roles traditionally assigned to her (mother and homemaker) after arrival than for a man to become the breadwinner and guide. It is also the case that many entry-level jobs are more suitable for women and female entrants will sometimes find themselves employment before the men in the family. The woman thus becomes the person who is interacting with the external environment and her competency and increased independence can be very challenging for her husband and older sons.

While this is an issue for any migrant coming from a more traditional culture into Australia, it can be argued that the challenges are greater for those from refugee backgrounds because the refugee experience itself is likely to have already placed relationships between husbands and wives under considerable strain and is often associated with:

- extended periods during which the man has not been able to be the provider and where he has been unable to protect his family;
- the mistaken belief that resettlement will mean that ‘everything will get back to normal’.

It is incumbent upon service providers to avoid being judgemental of entrants when they display attitudes and behaviours that seem out of place in contemporary Australian society but at the same time they should remember to:

- help entrants recognise that making some concessions in relation to their expectations about gender roles can be advantageous to them and does not mean that they are not respecting their cultural values;
- model constructive behaviour;
• be vigilant for signs that tensions within the home generated by changing gender roles are resulting in abuse and/or violence;

• be ready to refer entrants to trauma counselling services, family support programs or other relevant services if need be.

It is probably not appropriate to devote too much time to domestic and family violence because of the number of existing units on this topic.\textsuperscript{36}

**Challenges Faced By Families**

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child identifies the family as ‘the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members’, and places responsibility on governments to afford the family ‘the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community’.\textsuperscript{37}

While the maintenance of a strong and mutually supportive family unit is very important for successful settlement, it is not all that easy to achieve. There are multiple factors arising from the forced migration experience that place enormous strains on families.

First amongst these are the demographics of the current entrant caseload. The recent trend has been for:

- a high proportion (in the order of 65%) of entrants to be under 25 years of age;
- only small numbers (<15%) to be over 40 years of age;
- a significant proportion of the caseload (>30%) to be part of a large family (with 5 or more members).

The implications of the above include:

- the absence of ‘elders’ within communities to provide advice and guidance during the complex transition to life in Australia;
- the fact that a significant proportion of the caseload will never have known a ‘normal’ life;
- because of their size, the large families are likely to be affected by financial and housing stress.

\textsuperscript{36} CHCDFV1B Recognise and respond to domestic and family violence  
CHCDFV3B Provide crisis intervention and support to those experiencing domestic and family violence  
CHCDFV4B Promote community awareness of domestic and family violence  
CHCDFV7B Provide domestic and family violence support in non-English speaking background communities  
CHCDFV8B Provide support to children affected by domestic and family violence  
CHCDFV2B Manage own professional development in responding to domestic and family violence  
CHCDFV5B Counsel clients affected by domestic and family violence  
CHCDFV9B Work with users of violence to effect change

\textsuperscript{37} Preamble to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Another relevant characteristic of the current caseload is the amount of time the refugees have spent in limbo, either in refugee camps or living a hand-to-mouth existence on urban fringes. With the increasing emphasis on resolving some of the world’s protracted refugee problems, more and more of the current cohort of entrants have spent at least a decade (sometimes considerably longer) in situations of deprivation and dependency, where adults had little opportunity to develop a work ethic.

In addition to having to adjust to changing gender roles (as discussed above), families face many challenges adapting to life in Australia. These include but are by no means limited to:

- **parenting:** parenting is hard for everyone but even harder when the way you were parented is not acceptable in the new environment (e.g. slapping a naughty child) and when there are no members of your extended family to turn to for advice and support;

- **different rates of adjustment:** for a whole range of reasons (age, disposition, past experiences etc) members of the one family will vary in their willingness and capacity to embrace their new life in Australia. This can result in tensions within the family, sometimes between couples and often across generations;

- **young refugees challenging boundaries:** allied to the above is a common situation that results from young refugees seeking to imitate the behaviour and lifestyle of their peers at school in order ‘to fit in’ and in so doing, engaging in activities that run counter to the values of their parents;

- **generational shifts:** because young people tend to learn English and adapt to their new environment faster than their parents, it is not uncommon for them to take on roles of responsibility within the family (e.g. interpreting) they would not have in their own culture. This changes the dynamics and power relationships within the family. This in turn can result in adults feeling inadequate or undermined and young people stretching boundaries;

- **managing a budget:** Centrelink payments are made on the assumption that the members of the family will pool their payments for the collective benefit of the family. Some refugee men find it very confronting that the women and young people receive money in their own right. Sometimes family members, seduced by having money for the first time, will be reluctant to share. Budgeting and finances are the cause of conflict in many refugee homes;

- **remittances:** most refugees and forced entrants have family members and friends overseas to whom they feel obligated to send money. Many also have to repay travel loans and other debts as well as meet their living expenses. There is rarely enough money from Centrelink benefits to do both comfortably. This leaves entrants in a situation where, on the one hand, they risk criticism from within their community and intense psychological pressure from family members if they do not send money overseas and on the other, they risk getting into severe financial difficulties if they do. This too is a significant stressor in many families;

- **separation:** in a number of cases, resettlement involves reuniting families that have spent many years apart. This is most common in cases where women and children join men who arrived as asylum seekers.Rebuilding a family in an unfamiliar

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38 The Tracing Section with the Australian Red Cross provides invaluable support in cases where the whereabouts of a family member or friend is unknown. Contact Red Cross in your state or territory for more information.
environment is very challenging, especially where family members have been accustomed to interacting independently. This can be especially stressful for the husband who sees his role of head of household undermined by his wife or son(s);

- **blended families**: because they come from situations of war, conflict and dislocation, it is not uncommon for forced migrant families to have complex structures, with the husband and/or wife having had previous marriages and the children not necessarily being those of both parents. There are also cases where children have been formally or informally adopted into the family. These dynamics can exacerbate other stressors;

- **lack of recreational pursuits**: it is hard for newly arrived refugee families to know where to go and what to do in their spare time, especially as they have little disposable income. They often get trapped at home or spend leisure time interacting with a small group of families in similar circumstances. Close proximity and lack of activity exacerbate tensions;

- **laws and societal expectations**: in Australia the law prescribes acceptable and unacceptable interactions between family members, in particular in relation to hitting, slapping or other forms of physical contact. There are also societal expectations about how children are disciplined and about how people interact within families. Many refugees, however, come from cultures in which discipline (of spouse and/or children) includes corporal punishment. They do not have a repertoire of behaviour that meets Australian norms upon which they can draw when they need to discipline their children or deal with their own anger/frustration. Further, underlying fears about the police often complicates the issue and makes it difficult for families to resolve conflict.

Tensions resulting from unfulfilled expectations, difficulties interacting within the new environment, differential rates of adjustment within the family, financial tensions and other stressors can, if not appropriately addressed in a timely manner, result in substance abuse and/or family violence.

### Suggested Activity

Divide the class into five groups. Explain that each group will be responsible for choosing a member of their group to participate in a role play and that the group as a whole should help that person prepare for their role.

The role play will involve a family sitting around their dinner table. They come from Hermes, a conservative country in South Asia, and have been in Australia for 6 months.

The members of the family are:

- the father who is 40 years old and who was an engineer in his own country. Despite trying hard, he has been unable to find employment;
- the mother who was a nurse in her country. She now works as a cleaner in a nursing home, a job that involves long hours and shift work;
- the 16 year old daughter who has just been asked to go to her first party;
- the 10 year old son who is desperate to get a Play Station like his friends;
- the grandfather who is 65 and spends most of his day at home because his English is poor and he is afraid to go out.
Assign each group one of these roles.

After the groups have had some time to discuss the issues that would be most important for their character, ask the 'family members' to come to the table and begin their dinner table conversation.

At an appropriate time, stop the activity and initiate a discussion about what happened and why.

**Torture and Trauma**

Torture is the deliberate use of physical or psychological methods that cause a person severe pain and suffering with the intention of punishing, intimidating or extracting information from him or her. The torture must be perpetrated by a public official or at his or her direction.

*United Nations Declaration Against Torture*

Fear is an essential element of torture. When torture is used, a whole society, not just the individual who is being tortured, lives in fear. Other society members are afraid that it will happen to them. In this way, torture is a tool of social control used by a system that rules individuals and societies through fear.

**Trauma** is deep distress, intense anxiety, psychological pain and/or fear that results from a particular event or series of events. Most refugees and other forced migrants will have experienced not just one but a series of traumatic events. These might have included:

- witnessing a loved one being hurt or murdered;
- being attacked and/or injured, often by the police or military;
- being subjected to or witnessing rape or some other form of sexual violence (this applies to women, men and children);
- witnessing acts of violence against community members, including mass murder;
- arbitrary arrest and imprisonment;
- disappearances of family members and friends;
- persistent long-term political oppression;
- living in fear for their lives;
- being forced to flee from their home;
- perilous journeys in search of sanctuary;
- extreme deprivation;
- separation from loved ones;
- denial of basic needs (food, health care, education);
- prolonged periods of limbo …

Experts put the figure of the number of refugees who have experienced torture or other traumatic events at somewhere between 70 and 90 percent.

People rarely identify themselves as survivors of torture and trauma. It is thus very important for workers to know enough about the situation in their clients’ country of origin and something about the sorts of experiences they were likely to have had in exile to be

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39 Note the use of the word ‘survivor’ rather than ‘victim’.
able to make informed guesses as to the likelihood of someone being a survivor of torture and trauma. These can then be tested with the use of careful questioning although it is important to remember that people may not always want to talk about issues when you ask. They must be allowed to do this in their own time. Examples of suitable questions are:

- When did you leave your country?
- Did you choose to leave or were you forced to?
- What was the journey to Australia like?
- Have you spent time in a refugee camp?

Having a sense of the clients’ background helps a worker to develop their settlement plan and also guides them about the extent to which they need to be vigilant for signs of trauma. Be aware that gathering appropriate and sufficient information to help your client takes time and patience.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is the name given to a number of symptoms which often occur following exposure to extreme trauma. Common symptoms of PTSD include:

- difficulty concentrating;
- high levels of chronic anxiety;
- increased irritability and sometimes aggression;
- difficulty sleeping (either because of nightmares or because the mind keeps replaying events);
- flashbacks;
- feeling worried, fearful or helpless in situations which present no danger;
- feeling hopeless about the future and having difficulty making plans;
- feeling guilty about something they did or feel they should have done, or even for just being alive and safe when others are not.

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

- nightmares;
- regression to an earlier developmental stage 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 behaviours.

If problems are acute, persistent and/or interfere with daily functioning, they need to be addressed through referral to a specialist counselling program.

It can sometimes be difficult for a lay practitioner 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 provides some useful guidance.
### Indications for Making a Referral for Torture Trauma Counselling

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

Then comes the tricky issue of raising with the client that you think they would benefit from seeing a counsellor. In many countries the notion of counselling is unfamiliar or is equated with something that ‘mad people have’. Getting this conversation wrong can result not only in the client refusing help but also severing the relationship of trust between the worker and their client. In this as with the issues discussed above, we can turn to Foundation House for guidance as to how the issue can be broached.

### Raising the Topic of Counselling with Clients

Begin with saying what you have noticed in the way of a problem. For example ‘I have noticed you have been crying a lot’ and this has led you to wonder if there are ongoing difficulties.

Ask them if there is anything you can do to make things easier in the setting in which they are in.

Let them know that it is not unusual for people to feel that way, particularly if they have experienced hardships and violence before coming to Australia.

Ask if they have had any bad experiences prior to arrival or since arrival which they may not want to talk about but they think might be affecting them. (Do not ask questions such as ‘Have you been tortured?’).

Check if they know where to go for physical/medical problems.

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41 Ibid.
Indicate that if they are having problems which are not physical but are problems to do with not being able to concentrate or worries, or sleeplessness, that they can also see a doctor about them.

Tell them about the local torture and trauma counselling service and explain that this agency has been set up to help people who have been through war, civil violence, and political oppression.

If they indicate that they have had such experiences but are not interested in pursuing help, you could give them the required information for self referral at a later date. Show acceptance of their refusal and indicate that they can talk about it with you any time later.

If clients indicate that they do want help and a referral, say that you could refer them, if they agree or they could refer themselves.

Ask if there are any questions they would like to ask about your contact with them or any other agency. If none are asked, reassure about confidentiality and advise that there may be a waiting period.

The above inquiries should not be made unless there is some time available to do so and follow up with a referral if necessary. It is also important not to offer more than can be delivered.

If you are making a referral, agree to inform the client when you have actually made the referral. Tell them the outcome, such as whether they have been placed on a waiting list and how they will be contacted.

The table on the following page gives an overview of the how trauma affects people and the objectives of trauma counselling.
Causes of the Trauma Reaction, its Core Components and Recovery Goals

From Foundation House [www.foundationhouse.org.au](http://www.foundationhouse.org.au)
Every state and territory has its own specialist agency that provides support to survivors of torture and trauma and collectively they have developed excellent resources and training programs.

ACT: Companion House: www.companionhouse.org.au
New South Wales: STARTTS: 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
Tasmania: Phoenix House: www.mrchobart.org.au/Phoenix/Phoenix
Victoria: Foundation House: www.foundationhouse.org.au
Western Australia: ASETTS: www.asetts.org.au.

Use of Obsolete Survival Strategies

It is not uncommon to hear workers complaining that their clients are ‘ungrateful’ or ‘demanding’ or expressing frustration that their clients are not telling the truth when asked by others whether they have received a particular service. Similarly, they might complain that they withhold important information.

It is easy to be judgemental about such things and not think about why entrants are behaving in these ways.

One of the most important things you need when you are working with refugees and other forced migrants is empathy. You need to be able to put yourself into their shoes and think through why they might be thinking and acting in a particular way … and if you do this, you will quite often recognise that the things they do which seem difficult or counterproductive are actually the very behaviours that helped them to survive in their own country and/or in the country of first asylum.

For example:

- if people have spent a long time living in a situation where everything is scarce and they don’t know when they will get more, it is understandable that they will look for ways to get extra. This might mean ‘service shopping’, i.e. going to several agencies asking for the same things … and if it means saying that you have not received these things before, so be it;

- if getting the things you needed to keep your family alive meant competing with others, you learn to be very demanding. After all, the people who were polite and stood back ran the risk of missing out or even dying;

- many forced migrants come from countries where it is expected that you pay a bribe in order to get things done. It can be hard for entrants to accept both that this is not necessary in Australia and that they might get into trouble if they offer a bribe;

- in the totalitarian regimes from which many refugees come, spies and informers are used to tell the government if people were transgressing in any way. Survival meant learning not to trust anyone … even neighbours, friends and family members … and especially not anyone associated with the government. Learning to trust again takes time;

- both in their home country and in countries of first asylum, refugees had good reason to fear people in uniform – police, the army, local militias etc. It is very common for newly arrived refugees to be afraid of the people we tend to think of as those to whom
we turn to for help. Even the fact that they have been told that things are different in Australia does not necessarily take away the fear.

Not all survival strategies are counterproductive in their new environment. In order to survive refugees had to be strong, patient, forthright, flexible and creative (amongst other things). These are all very useful traits that can assist their settlement.

The challenge for service providers is to:

- recognise learnt behaviour patterns that will interfere with entrants getting the support they need and work with the entrants to help them understand how to reshape these strategies for life in Australia;

- draw on and reinforce the positive coping strategies, helping entrants understand how these can be put to good use in Australia.

Suggested Activity

Using some of the survival strategies listed above, ask the class to:

- suggest why refugees might have adopted this strategy and how it might have benefited them in a refugee camp;

- explain how continuing to employ his behaviour in Australia might be counterproductive;

- suggest strategies for respectfully helping entrants to see that their old ways might not help them in Australia and to learn new survival strategies.

References


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42 The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (Foundation House) publications and resources are available on their website [www.foundationhouse.org.au](http://www.foundationhouse.org.au) for free download, however these materials can only be presented or reproduced with prior written permission. For more information, please contact the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture info@foundationhouse.org.au.
Participant Activities

1. Imagine that you have just been miraculously – and unexpectedly – transported to a remote village in the highlands of Papua New Guinea.
   
   (a) What skills do you have that you think would be most useful to you in your new home?
   
   (b) What survival skills that are useful in Australia do you think would of little use (or even cause big problems for you) in PNG?

2. Reference was made above to the many challenges faced by families when they are resettled in Australia and of the importance of looking out for signs of stress within families. What sort of things would you look for?

3. What steps would you take if you were concerned about the safety of any of your clients in their home?

4. What impact do you think the absence of ‘elders’ within refugee communities might have? Can you think of ways of addressing any problems this might create?

5. Explain how you would go about helping an entrant to understand the importance of telling the truth to service providers?

6. Visit the website of the Torture and Trauma counselling service in your state/territory. What are the most useful features within this website for you as a worker?
## Topic 5: Understanding Refugee Communities

### TOPIC 5: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY

**AIM:** to enable reflection on the role of refugee communities in the settlement process and to equip participants with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to support the development of strong, functional communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What makes a community</td>
<td>Activity, presentation and discussion</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping communities to develop into constructive and supportive entities</td>
<td>Presentation, discussion and activity</td>
<td>45 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for emerging communities</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</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.

### What Makes a Community

The word ‘community’ has a number of meanings, depending on the context in which it is used. For the purpose of this unit it is defined as follows:

**Community** = a group of people who share common characteristics and are bound together by interests and common aspirations.

**Suggested Activity:**

Brainstorm with the class what they think the word ‘community’ means and ask them what ‘communities’ they are a part of. Get them to reflect on the list of communities they have suggested and identify the reasons why these groups have formed.

Then suggest to them that they have migrated to another country. Ask them to reflect upon what sort of communities would they seek out and why?
It might be interesting to refer back to their answers during the course of the discussions that follow.

When we speak about a community in the context of refugees and other forced migrants, we are usually referring to a group of humanitarian entrants who choose to associate with each other because they share one or more of the following characteristics:

- their tribal affiliation, ethnicity or nationality;
- their religion;
- their political opinion;
- the location from which they came;
- the time of or reasons for their expulsion from their country of origin;
- the location of or experiences during exile;
- common interests or aspirations;
- other factors seen as relevant to the individuals concerned.

In addition, these people have chosen to associate with each other for particular reasons (both practical and psychological). Every individual within that community probably has a slightly different set of reasons for coming together with the others but there are some common themes. These include but are not limited to:

- **seeking comfort in the familiar**: when you are in an alien environment, it is reassuring to be with people who speak the same language, have had similar experiences, see the world in the same way, laugh at the same jokes ...;

- **seeking security in numbers**: linked to the above, when you feel insecure (as everyone does when they come to a new country), it is reassuring to feel that you are not alone. Some refugees who settle in rural and regional areas really miss the lack of compatriots;

- **recreating ‘family’**: many entrants come from cultures within which extended rather than nuclear families are the norm. It seems strange for entrants not to have people around them to whom they can turn for advice and comfort. Where actual family members are not present, many entrants will seek to recreate the feeling of an extended family by forming close links to other individuals or families;

- **preserving the struggle**: some entrants join with others to keep in touch with developments in their country of origin and to try to advocate for change. Jose Ramos Horta and those who worked with him to advocate for independence in East Timor were such a group. Similar groups focus on raising funds to support projects in their home country or in refugee camps and settlements;

- **supporting new entrants**: many groups choose to focus on helping people within the community to settle in Australia. Sometimes this is done through forming close links to settlement agencies, sometimes it is done by the community itself (either through voluntary work or by applying for funding for a worker) and often by a mixture of the two;

- **preserving their culture**: despite the trauma that caused their flight, many entrants are deeply attached to their home country and their culture. They come together to preserve this and to ensure their children grow up with a sense of their heritage.

One of the common misconceptions in the settlement sector is thinking that all communities are alike – or at least similar. When you reflect, however, on the many factors that underpin the formation of communities and the very different backgrounds from which their members have come, it is easy to see that this is not the case. Then
when you add individual personalities into the mix, it is easy to see that any discussion about ‘refugee communities’ must, at best, be based on broad generalisations.

Acknowledging this, it is possible to observe amongst the current cohort of refugees that there are some common characteristics in the community organisations and groups that have formed:

- **Within African** communities tribal affiliation or ethnicity is usually the binding factor. In some but not all cases this is linked to religion. Many African community groups are also united by and retain a keen interest in developments in their country of origin. Reunification with family and friends is also a very high priority.

- Community groups from the **Middle East** and **South West Asia** are much more difficult to characterise. Entrants from minority religious or ethnic groups with a shared history of persecution will often form tight knit and mutually supportive communities. On the other hand, those expelled for political reasons, especially from Iraq and to a lesser extent Iran, frequently remain wary of associating too closely with other refugees. This is an understandable relic of the years during which spies and informers were everywhere within their community and people found it difficult to know who to trust.

- The current cohort of entrants from **South** and **South East Asia** are tending to form into strong, mutually supportive communities with a strong focus on settlement.

Having said this about the various regional communities, it is important to note that there are exceptions. You also need to recognise that all communities are affected by events in their country of origin or concerning members of their community elsewhere and it is likely that there will be times when communities become more politicised and riven by factions. The key for workers is to be sensitive to developments affecting the communities with whom they are working and seek advice from community elders, bi-cultural co-workers and others to whom they have links. Equally important is for workers from within these communities to remain neutral and act in a professional way.\(^4^3\)

Before leaving this section, there is a significant point that must be made: communities form rather than are formed. In other words, a community forms when the members of a community believe there is a reason for them coming together rather than because they are told they should form a community. Outsiders (e.g. workers) might suggest that one way entrants can achieve certain objectives would be for them to form a group or organisation but this will only happen if they have the inclination and drive to make it happen. This doesn’t mean to say that they will not benefit from support, advice or mentoring along the way.

### Helping Communities to Develop into Constructive and Supportive Entities

As mentioned repeatedly in this unit, one of the most important objectives of settlement work is empowerment. It is sometimes easier to do things for a client or a community group, but all this does is create dependency (and a huge workload). It is far better to assist entrants join forces to achieve common objectives.

In broad terms, there are three things that often get in the way of communities being able to form efficient and effective community organisations:

\(^{4^3}\) The challenges that confront bicultural workers are the focus of CHCSW402A.
None are straightforward to rectify but the first is typically the easiest for an ‘outsider’ to confront.

**Forming an Organisation**

Most entrants come from countries where things are far less regulated than in Australia. Here there are lots of laws that have been introduced to protect the public but at the same time mean that people cannot just go out and do what they want. For example:

- it is against the law to fundraise without permission from a government department;
- you cannot hold a public event without insurance;
- you cannot hire a hall unless you are linked to a legal entity;
- you must abide by work health and safety laws;
- you can be sued if you damage something or someone is injured at one of your events; etc.

New entrants soon realise that if they want to do anything more than just meet in someone’s home for social reasons, they will have to formalise their structure in some way. The options open to them are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURE</th>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unincorporated not-for-profit Association</strong></td>
<td>• Very loose structure</td>
<td>• Members are personally liable if things go wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Members free to join or leave</td>
<td>• Cannot seek funding from the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Not able to apply for grant funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group auspiced by an Incorporated Association or Company</strong></td>
<td>• Legal protection</td>
<td>• No separate identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Guidance and support</td>
<td>• Must abide by rules of auspicing agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incorporated Association</strong></td>
<td>• Can make own decisions</td>
<td>• Must register and abide by rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can open bank account</td>
<td>• Must pay set-up and annual fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can apply for funding</td>
<td>• Must submit annual returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can fundraise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Has legal protection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Company Ltd</strong></td>
<td>• Can make own decisions</td>
<td>• Very expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can open bank account</td>
<td>• Rules are complex and are better suited for trading or for profit entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can apply for funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can fundraise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Has legal protection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Has national coverage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most community groups choose either the auspicing or incorporation option, sometimes starting off by being auspiced by an established organisation and then progressing to incorporation at a later date. Whichever path they choose to follow there are things they must know and things they must do.

The Multicultural Development Association (MDA) in Brisbane has produced a guide that is specifically targeted at leaders of new and emerging communities and covers:

- Legal and Operational Frameworks
- Governance
- Financial Management
- Funding
- Project Planning
- Project Management.

The Introductory Guide for Community Leaders, and the accompanying 'train the trainer' kit, can be obtained from MDA: www.mdainc.org.au.

In addition, the Our Community website: www.ourcommunity.com.au is an invaluable resource for any community agency, as are the website of the state Councils of Social Services.

**Effective Leadership**

To be an effective leader, or an effective member of a leadership team, a person must have the right combination of:

- **motivation:** good leaders seek leadership roles in order to benefit other people. Ineffective leaders think only of what they can get out of the role;

- **skills:** good leaders know how to get the best out of the people around them and to motivate others. They also listen carefully, consult widely and follow the wishes of the majority. Ineffective leaders make all the decisions and give orders;

- **knowledge:** good leaders understand the environment around them ... or know when they do not know and seek advice from those who can help. Ineffective leaders assume that they know but often do not;

- **legitimacy:** good leaders are chosen by their constituency and have their respect. Ineffective leaders self-promote and gain and retain power by doing deals and undermining any opposition.

One of the things that often happens in society as a whole is that the wrong people often put themselves forward as leaders, and refugee communities are not exempt from this. Without in any way seeking to diminish the superb leadership that exists within many refugee communities, it is important to understand a few of the reasons why some refugee community groups struggle:

- Many countries from which refugees and other forced migrants come are highly class based. When they come to Australia, people from within the ruling classes believe that they have a right to take on leadership roles and to tell others what to do ... just as they did back home. Sometimes this works well, especially if these people are well motivated and have leadership skills, but this is not always the case. Things can be further complicated when other entrants want to break away from the rigid hierarchy
of their homeland (especially in cases where the ruling classes were directly or indirectly associated with the persecution they experienced) and refuse to acknowledge the aspiring leaders.

- A corollary to the above is that there are also occasions when a person who would make an ideal leader believes it is not their place to lead because they come from a caste, class or other group traditionally seen as playing only subservient roles within the community.

- As discussed above, the highly regulated environment in Australia requires community leaders to know about all sorts of things - incorporation, insurance, fundraising etc – most of which are quite alien. Many community leaders don’t know what they don’t know. They expect that things will operate in Australia in much the same way as they did in their home country, and even if they have a sense that there might be rules that govern certain things, they are used to operating in an environment where there is little enforcement so they don’t understand the need to inquire, learn and observe when it comes to the laws that govern the operation of community groups.

- Scarcity within refugee camps and settlements can lead to situations where certain individuals use intimidation and aggression to ensure they get their share (or more than their fair share). These people believe that the same tactics will work just as well in Australia and use them to try to exert influence over others.

- Some community groups focus heavily on the past and on what happened in their country of origin. Old animosities prevail and there is a sense that wrongs must be righted. Groups fixated on such things find it hard to focus on their new life in Australia and to come to terms with the need to live side by side with other groups that came from their country of origin.

- Part of the refugee experience is being stripped of your sense of self-worth. Some people see resettlement as providing them an opportunity to regain this and use a variety of tactics including engaging in (sometimes grandiose) self-promotion and gathering around themselves a group of people for the purpose of affirming their status.

- Another characteristic amongst some entrant groups is that they have spent very long periods in refugee camps and, except for a small group of individuals who were lucky enough to get work with UNHCR or NGOs, they have had little experience with ‘work’ and have effectively become institutionalised … expecting that things will be given to them. They don’t necessarily have an appreciation of the fact that individual or collective effort can achieve results and instead wait around for things to happen … and get upset when they don’t.

- There are also some community leaders who are either cowered by or obsessed with ‘important people’. At the one extreme you will see leaders who ‘don’t want to bother others with their problems’ and it can be very difficult to persuade them that they have a legitimate right to raise issues of concern with relevant authorities – including politicians. On the other hand you have leaders who are obsessed with being seen to know people they deem important, especially politicians. In such cases it is the act of being seen or photographed together that is important and the opportunity to raise the concerns of their community is often overlooked.

When you reflect on all of this is seems quite miraculous that the groups that form within refugee communities do as well as they do and that so many manage to achieve quite remarkable things.

This being said, it has to be acknowledged that some groups struggle – usually for want of effective leadership as a result of one or more of the above reasons – and the challenge
that confronts community development workers is to find a way to turn this situation around. This is never easy, especially for someone from outside the community and there is not a simple strategy that can be used. Each situation requires careful analysis and the adoption of a strategy tailored to meet the specific circumstances. This being said, there are some useful hints for a worker confronted with a dysfunctional community group:

- Don’t leap in. Take time to get to know the group and remember, things are rarely as they seem at first.
- Talk to other people who know the group to try to get a better understanding of the dynamics within it and seek their advice about possible courses of action.
- Be careful not to be judgemental. You might need to point out the consequences of certain courses of action (or inaction) but don’t tell them that what they are doing is ‘wrong’.
- Don’t try to take over. As tempting as it might be to take on doing things for the group, this is not sound community development and will not help them in the long term.
- If you are young … or a female … or both … recognise that many community leaders will not be open to taking your advice and will not necessarily believe that you are capable of assisting them. Sometimes it is possible to work through this by being patient, undemonstrative and constructive. Sometimes you might need to call in someone they are likely to respect and work through this person.
- Provide as many positive examples as possible. This might take the form of ‘how to’ guides such as the MDA Guide for Community Leaders discussed above or possibly even introducing them to someone they are likely to respect and who is willing to take on a mentoring role or finding an established community group that will provide support (see below).

Please note: there is a close link between the issues covered above and those that will be covered in Topic 10 (Effective Advocacy).

**Suggested Activity**

Ask the class (either in groups or as a whole) to come up with as many characteristics as they can of ‘effective community leadership’ and ‘ineffective community leadership’. Record these.

Pose the following questions:

- How do people become good leaders?
- What makes people ineffective leaders?
- How could the refugee experience influence a person’s capacity to be an effective leader?
- What strategies could a worker use to promote effective leadership?

**Support for Emerging Communities**

Federal, state and local governments recognise the importance of supporting new and emerging communities. In addition to funding direct settlement services, there are also grants and other programs that are targeted at the communities themselves.
In May 2010 the (then) Department of Immigration and Citizenship announced a new program, the **Diversity and Social Cohesion Program** which incorporated the objectives of two previous programs, the Diverse Australia Program and the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security. The Diversity and Social Cohesion Program provides the additional resources often needed to develop community projects and find ways of helping communities build stronger relations. Projects aim to address cultural, racial and religious intolerance by promoting respect, fairness and a sense of belonging for everyone. Some projects will also build the resilience and capacity of specific communities that are under pressure as a result of their culture or religion.


In addition, **state and territory governments** support a number of initiatives. For more information go to the website of the relevant agency:

- [www.multicultural.nt.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.nt.gov.au)
- [www.multicultural.qld.gov.au](http://www.multicultural.qld.gov.au)

Similarly 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.

In addition, it is important not to overlook the value of **mentoring**. Mentoring in this context involves linking members of a small and emerging community with those from an established community so that the newcomers can receive collegial support and guidance. There have been a number of successful mentoring programs around the country, including one linking the Sudanese and Vietnamese communities in South Australia. A secondary – but also invaluable - outcome of such programs is that the communities get to know each other, thereby enhancing community harmony and breaking down prejudices.

**Culture**

Thus far we have been talking about very practical issues in relation to communities but it is also important to recognise that entrant communities are also defined by and important repositories of the culture of those within them.

When we talk about ‘culture’, more often than not we are referring to things such as food, dress, music and dance, traditions and practices, art and handicrafts and literature.

These are all visible and, to some extent, accessible to ‘outsiders’. Culture, however, goes far deeper than this.
Many theorists have used the analogy of an iceberg to describe culture. Just as icebergs have 10% above water (and hence visible) and 90% below the surface, so too does culture. The following is one depiction of the Cultural Iceberg.44

As the above picture shows, culture is influenced by a range of external factors and it is thus understandable that when we consider culture in the context of refugee communities, we are in fact looking at a complex mix of blended cultures derived from and influenced by:

- the culture of the country of origin - at the time they left;
- the events that led to their expulsion or departure from their country;
- the culture of the country of exile (especially if they were there for a long time);
- the specific culture within the refugee camp or settlement;
- their experiences in their country, during flight and in exile.

Topic 8 will take up the issue of cross-cultural work in more detail but there are some points worth making at this time:

- Just because refugees have been forced from their homelands does not necessarily mean that they are not proud of their cultural heritage. Preserving this in exile can be very important for some refugees.

44 From www.languageandculture.com
• Other refugees – especially those who have had horrendous experiences – might have an ambivalent attitude to their country of origin and its culture. These are the people who will try to embrace ‘Australian culture’ as quickly as possible.

• Refugees from one country will have different ‘cultures’ because they have had different experiences. Some of these differences will be because they come from different ethnic groups, classes, regions, religions etc in their country of origin. Others result from their leaving their country at different times or from them spending time in different countries on route to Australia.

Identity

Many service providers equate the term ‘refugee’ with something to be proud of and believe that refugees are to be admired for their courage and strength. The issue is not quite that simple for the refugees themselves.

Some refugees happily define themselves as ‘refugees’ and do so for the rest of their lives. They might see this as:

• a badge of honour,
• something to be proud of,
• a symbol of their strength and resilience ...

Other refugees want to discard the term as quickly as possible because they equate ‘refugee’ with:

• all the horrors they have been through,
• the deprivation and degradation of their life in exile,
• their failure to protect their life/family;
• their abandonment of the struggle in their homeland;
• their past (with the present and future being defined by their status as a permanent resident or citizen of Australia) ...

Both opinions are equally legitimate and should be respected. It is important when working with refugees that you enable them to define their own identity and be clear about whether they want to be known as a refugee and if not, how do they want to be identified.

It is equally important to enable refugees to define other aspects of their identity, not least:

• the name they want to give to their country of origin (eg Burma or Myanmar, Iran or Persia),
• whether they want to be known as a national of this country or defined according to their ethnicity or tribal affiliation (eg South Sudanese or Dinka, Afghan or Hazara);
• the name they want to be known as;
• how they want to be addressed, etc.

The refugee experience is, for many, dehumanising and degrading. Being able to redefine one’s identity is a critical step on the road to rebuilding their life.
Suggested Activity

This activity can be done as a whole class brainstorming exercise or as small group discussion depending on the nature of the class and the time available.

Ask participants to list the words they feel best describe (are the best synonyms for) ‘refugee’. Then ask them to reflect upon how these views are likely to influence the way they treat their clients and whether it might be necessary to consider tempering their actions in some way, e.g.:

- if they are very sympathetic towards refugees, might they need to be careful not to be seen as patronising or crusading; or
- if they have less favourable views, might their clients pick up on these, making it hard for them to build trust; etc.

Be mindful that if you have forced migrants in the class, you will need to modify this activity to accommodate their dual roles as both the object and subject of the discussion. It would also be good to get their thoughts on how they feel about the label ‘refugee’.

References


Introductory Guide for Community Leaders. MDA. www.mdlinc.org.au

Our Community website: www.ourcommunity.com.au

Participant Activities

1. What do you think are the most important things that define a community?
2. What communities do you belong to?
3. In the context of community leadership, what do you think the following attributes mean?
   
   - Motivation:
   - Skills:
   - Knowledge:
   - Legitimacy:
4. What are the key objectives of the Diversity and Social Cohesion Program and how does it assist emerging communities?
5. Mentoring provides valuable practical assistance for a new community by linking it to a more established community. Can you think of another useful outcome of mentoring?
6. Go to the website of the agency responsible for multicultural issues in your state/territory. What are the key programs targeting humanitarian settlement and support for communities?

7. Write down the first things that come to your mind when you hear the word ‘refugee’.

8. Do you think you might need to ‘park these thoughts one side’ when working with refugees? Explain your answer.

9. List the key qualities you think someone must have to work effectively with refugees and other forced migrants?
**Topic 6: Working with Clients #1: First Steps**

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

**AIM:** to provide participants with the skills and knowledge that will enable them to:

- find out background information about clients from a location/background unfamiliar to them
- interact with new clients in a culturally appropriate and respectful manner
- understand the issues that need to be considered when undertaking a needs assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparing for a new group of clients</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting clients for the first time</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needs assessment</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
</tr>
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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.

The focus of this session is on the things a worker must think about and do when they are encountering a new group of clients for the first time ... and when they are meeting new clients for the first time.

**Preparing for a New Group of Clients**

One of the most interesting aspects of working with refugees is that the origin of the caseload is constantly changing. As we explored in Topic 2, different groups have dominated the Humanitarian Program over time – Vietnamese, Lebanese, Chileans, Yugoslavs, Sudanese ... and we can be certain that in the future there will be different groups again. Also, in the recent years there has been an increasing diversification within the Program and small numbers of refugees are arriving from countries most people have never heard of like Togo and Mauritania.

In Topic 1 we spoke about ‘the refugee experience’ but it is essential for workers to be mindful of the fact that each refugee has his or her own story and that each group of entrants will have been through different experiences and will have needs that reflect their background and these experiences. As a result, each time workers encounter a new group of entrants or an entrant from a country/group they have not worked with before, it is
important they do their ‘homework’, either independently or better still, in collaboration with their workmates.

**Suggested Activity**

Explain that a group of 60 entrants will be arriving next week from Concordia. Ask the participants to work in groups to come up with answers for the following questions:

- What do you need to know about Concordia?
- What do you need to know about the entrants?
- How and where they would find these things out?

Make sure that their responses include the following:

The things they should want to find out about Concordia include:

- where it is
- its demography
- its politics
- events behind the displacement
- which groups are being targeted and why
- basics about the language, religion, culture, food etc.

The things they should be looking to find out about the entrants include:

- why they fled Concordia
- when they fled
- whether they come from a particular ethnic or other subgroup
- what religion they practice and how relevant this is (e.g. are they strict adherents and/or was it the reason for their persecution)
- where have they been since they fled
- what have their experiences been in exile
- what is the family composition and age range
- what access have they had to health care, education and other basic services while in exile
- what is level of education and employment experience
- what level of exposure they will have had to ‘western’ lifestyle
- what language(s) they speak
- what is their ability in English
- what is their current health status
- how likely they are to require trauma interventions soon after arrival
- what they traditionally eat
- how to interact with the entrants (see following section).

When considering sources of information it is relevant to note that:

- some sources of information are far more reputable than others;
- when engaging in web-based research, it is important to think carefully about the source and whether it might be biased;
- reputable sources of information about country situations, entrant groups and human rights include:

  - UNHCR
  - DIBP
Wikipedia can provide some very useful basic information but it should not be regarded as a reputable source. This is because information can be posted (or altered) by anyone and there are no guarantees of accuracy;

- information posted by the governments of source and receiving countries can be biased or misleading, as can information posted by some political and advocacy groups;

- it is possible to deduce information about clients from their visa subclass. In addition to the general assumptions that can be made about persecution and trauma, certain visa subclasses give additional clues. For example, it is reasonable to begin with the assumption that a Woman at Risk entrant (visa subclass 204) has been selected for resettlement because she is in danger in the situation she is in and possibly has been subjected to violence (especially sexual violence) and/or exploitation. Issues around trust and safety will thus be of particular importance, so too will be medical (possibly gynaecological) assessment. This should be handled delicately with adequate education and provision of choices. Similarly, one can assume about an Emergency Rescue visa (visa subclass 203) holder that the entrant is coming from acute, recent turmoil, will have had no preparation for travel and will need additional assistance (and sensitive care) upon arrival;

- members of the entrants’ communities are an invaluable source of information but it is important to keep certain things in your mind when you are gathering information from them. These include:
  - whether the people already in Australia are from the same group (religious/ethnic etc) as the entrants or from another group ... and possibly even from the same group as those who persecuted the new arrivals;
  - how representative the people to whom you are speaking are: are they community leaders (hence probably older men) and might there be other opinions that are relevant to consider (eg those of the women, young people etc);
  - might the opinions of those to whom you are speaking be biased in any way. Bias can be in favour of the entrants – they might be keen to present an overly rosy picture of the new arrivals, thinking that this will reinforce the good standing of their community. On the other hand, they might be dismissive of the new arrivals, especially if they think their experiences were less severe than their own or they think they might bring their community into disrepute (this is common from communities speaking about those who come by boat seeking asylum);
  - how much do they actually know about the experiences of the entrants. Sometimes they will know a great deal because they have been in regular contact with them (maybe some are even family members or close friends) but in other cases, they might not know much at all (having left their country before any of the troubles started), and pride or ignorance will prevent them from disclosing the limitations in their knowledge.

Before moving on, there is great value in asking the participants to reflect on WHY they need to know these things ... and also stressing that the information discussed in this activity should be sought BEFORE the entrants arrive and not solicited from them.
Meeting Clients for the First Time

There is an old saying: ‘you never get a second chance to make a first impression’. It is thus very important for workers to think about the impression they make when they meet new clients for the first time.

In doing this, workers must recognise that they are the ones in the position of power and therefore it is up to them to make an effort to make their clients feel comfortable and able to begin building a relationship of trust with the worker. And with a little bit of preparatory homework, it is not hard to do this.

When encountering clients from a particular country for the first time, it is a good idea to find out about the following:

- **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 our 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 the household?

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

- **Attire**: is it important to be very modest in your attire?

- **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 e.g. accepting refreshment, commenting (or not) on the home etc?

Members of the entrants’ community can usually provide advice about such things and the information you can glean about such things is far less likely to be tainted or biased than other information.

**Suggested Activity**

Prepare a PowerPoint slide from the following or bring in pictures similar to those shown below:
You never get a second chance to make a good first impression

Ask the participants about the saying and get them to suggest what the pictures represent. Then ask them to think of other things they should know if they want to make a good first impression.

HINT: the pictures represent (clockwise from top left) greetings, accepting refreshment/hospitality, taking shoes off when they enter the house and culturally appropriate work attire (or not in this case).

Needs Assessment

Each person working with refugees and other forced migrants will have certain tasks prescribed by their job (be this the provision of orientation support, undertaking a health assessment, assessing entitlements etc) and it is possible they will also be given an assessment tool or guidelines to assist them with these tasks. This section is not about this part of their work because this is agency specific and it is up to the employing agency to ensure staff members are well briefed before commencing their duties. This being said, it is possible to prepare people in a generic way for the important task of undertaking an initial needs assessment with a new client from a refugee background.

As with other areas discussed, the first thing a worker needs to bear in mind is that he or she is in a position of power. The worker knows more than the client and is also in a position to provide (or not provide) certain services for the client. This reality has to be respected and effective workers will never abuse their position.

**Questions to pose to the class:** have they ever been in a situation where someone from whom they are seeking assistance or advice has played games with them? How did that make them feel?

For a worker to undertake an effective needs assessment it is also essential that they be:
- **empathetic:** it is important to try to look at the situation from the position of the client and consider what they might be feeling;

- **a reflective listener:** you need to REALLY listen to the clients and reflect on what they are saying – focusing in particular on looking for their strengths and weaknesses to help you to plan to develop their skills. Sometimes this is much easier said than done, especially if they are confused, but it does not mean it is not important;

- **observant:** in addition to listening, you need to observe and there are many things you need to look out for including but by no means limited to:
  - how the clients are responding to your presence;
  - family dynamics;
  - who the decision makers are within the family;
  - the health and general well-being of the entrants;
  - their level of confidence and ability to acquire new skills/knowledge;
  - physical signs of anxiety or depression such as agitation or undue flatness of affect …

- **non-judgemental:** working in the human services area means working with all kinds of people and refugees are often carrying more ‘baggage’ than most. As discussed in Topic 4 … and will be further discussed below … this can influence their behaviour and the choices they make. You have to refrain from imposing your own value set and from making judgements about your clients based on your own view of the world. This is an issue that will be considered in more detail in Topic 12;

- **flexible:** anyone who has worked with refugees for any length of time will talk about the importance of ‘expecting the unexpected’. Further, refugees will invariably have their own agendas and ways of viewing the world. If, as a worker, you seek to ‘follow a script’ … in much the same way that call-centre operators are required to do … chances are you will end up feeling very frustrated. If, on the other hand, you are flexible and think of various ways to approach an issue, chances are you will be able to satisfy your own agenda;

- **patient:** many refugees come from worlds very different to our own; further, their experiences often have an impact upon their ability to absorb information and retain new facts. There will be times when you feel that all you are doing is repeating yourself and you can easily end up feeling very frustrated. Don’t do this … it will make you feel bad and not really solve the problem. Remember, you need to be patient and understanding … and remember it is improbable that your clients want to be difficult, it is just very hard for them to take everything in;

- **respectful:** as you will have gathered from the above, it is not always easy working with refugees, especially those who have recently arrived. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that they are ‘ignorant’ or ‘difficult’. This is rarely the case. The reality is that they are people who are in an alien environment, managing as best they know how. As discussed in Topic 3, one of the important goals of settlement is the restoration of self-respect, something the refugee experience strips from you. As a worker, you play an integral role in this process. If you treat your clients respectfully and see the restoration of their dignity as a key part of your role, chances are they will respond to you far better and this in turn will make your job much easier.

**Suggested Activity**

Divide the class into pairs (or small groups if you wish). Ask each pair to develop a brief vignette showing either how to interact with a client in one or more of the ways outlined above … or the consequences of not doing this.
Complicating Factors

When conducting a needs assessment, you not only have to think about how you behave and react, you also have to think about the way in which your clients are behaving and why this might be the case. In Topic 4 we looked at some of the ways in which the refugee experience can affect people. Here are some other consequences that are of particular relevance when you are conducting a needs assessment.

Where refugees come from backgrounds very different to that of Australia and/or have spent protracted periods in refugee camps, they can have a very limited world view. As a result, they quite literally ‘don’t know what they don’t know’. Typically people who have grown up here will have an idea about what services are available and what their options might be. At the very least, they might suspect that there is something and ask. Refugees won’t always do this. It might not occur to them, for example, that there might be somewhere to leave their children while they attend English classes or that it is against the law to drive a car without taking out third-party insurance.

Questions to pose to the class: What are some other things newly arrived refugees might not know that they don’t know? What is the relevance of this for a worker?

The answer to the second question is don’t assume anything. As the worker, you have an idea of what support you can offer and what other services might be relevant. Take responsibility for informing entrants of their options and ensure that you have given a clear explanation about what these entail.

Another thing you might find yourself having to contend with when undertaking a needs assessment is that refugees might (often subconsciously) have competing agendas. Many refugees grapple with the following:

- **to study English or get a job:** on the one hand they know that English is the key to participation; on the other, they have many financial obligations and getting employment is seen as the best way to meet these. They often can’t see how they can possibly juggle both of these (not to mention also meeting their obligations to their family and their community as well);

- **to pay debts or support family and friends overseas:** as previously discussed, almost every refugee has an obligation to send money to relatives or friends overseas. If they do not do this, they will not only feel a deep sense of guilt and personal failure. They are also likely to come under considerable pressure from the would-be recipients and from community members in Australia. But if they do send money, it is unlikely they will be able to meet all their financial obligations in Australia, especially as many are already obligated to repay travel loans as well as paying rent, feeding their family and covering all costs on Centrelink benefits. Complicating this further is the fact that in many cases the only way they can be spared from the obligation to send remittances is for the recipient to be resettled in Australia … which in turn leads to another financial impost … securing the money for airfares and the other costs associated with proposing an entrant under the Humanitarian Program;

- **to focus on settlement or wait for their family to arrive:** a significant proportion of protection visa holders and many offshore entrants have been separated from their spouse, children and/or other significant family members. This poses additional challenges during the initial settlement period, not least because those in this situation are caught between knowing that there are certain things they must do/decide and not wanting to make any decisions until the family is reunited. Many service providers see these entrants as hard to work with because they find it
difficult to make decisions and because they have a tendency to be highly mobile and will relocate without notice and seemingly on a whim;

- **to believe you or believe what others have told them:** as a worker you are not the only person from whom a humanitarian entrant receives information. It is a pretty good bet that before they left for Australia people would have told them all sorts of things about what they should expect, some of which might be linked to reality but this is not always the case. Then when they enter the community, they will also be getting a range of messages from numerous sources of varying reliability. Human nature is such that people will want to believe the most favourable message (for example, to believe the person who told them that they will be given a house, a car and all sorts of other things when they get here) ... but then they feel disappointed, or cheated or angry when they realise that the reality is different;

- **to race forward or tread warily:** after being forced to put their lives on hold, many refugees are keen to ‘get back to normal’ as quickly as possible. They can become very impatient when they discover that the things they must do (learn English, find a house, secure employment ...) will take time and considerable effort. At the same time they can also feel uneasy about making decisions that will help them to move forward, more accustomed to the inertia of their recent lives.

Understanding these and the many factors that influence the way refugees might act does not necessarily solve the dilemmas you will face as a worker but it can help you to manage expectations and find ways forward.

**For discussion:** ask the participants to extrapolate how the complicating factors listed above might have an impact on their efforts to assist their clients and to suggest strategies for minimising their impact.

**References**


**Websites:**

- UNHCR: [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)
- BBC World: [www.news.bbc.co.uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk)
- Human Rights Watch: [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)
- Amnesty International: [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)
- US Committee for Refugees: [www.refugees.org](http://www.refugees.org)

**DSS Community Profiles:**

DSS makes available Community Profiles to assist service providers to gain a better understanding of the backgrounds and needs of Humanitarian Program arrivals. The Profiles contain information on key settlement locations, demographic characteristics of recent arrivals, likely settlement needs and cultural and country backgrounds. Development of the Community Profiles series is ongoing and further communities will be
added in the future. Profiles currently available give information about entrants from the following countries:

- Afghanistan
- Bhutan
- Myanmar (Burma)
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Liberia
- Sierra Leone
- South Sudan
- Togo
- Uzbekistan


**YouTube:**

DIBP and DSS have their own channels on the popular video sharing website YouTube which feature stories and reports about various aspects of the immigration story. Go to www.youtube.com/ImmiTV and www.youtube.com/userfahcsia.

**Participant Activities**

1. Select a refugee-producing country you know nothing about e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo, Togo, Mauritania, Bhutan, Colombia … and go to the following websites:
   - DIBP: www.border.gov.au
   - UNHCR: www.unhcr.org
   - BBC: www.news.bbc.co.uk
   - Human Rights Watch: www.hrw.org
   - Amnesty International: www.amnesty.org
   - US Committee for Refugees: www.refugees.org

   … to find out about

   - where it is
   - its demography
   - its politics
   - events behind the displacement
   - which groups are being targeted and why
   - basics about the language, religion, culture etc.

   When you record the information, make sure you also record its source.

2. Do a Google search and look for other sources of information about your chosen country. Were you able to find any websites that were clearly not reliable? If so, what was this website and why did you suspect its reliability?

3. Arrange to have a chat to a person from a country very different to your own. This person might be a classmate or colleague or someone you know socially. Ask them to give you advice about polite interactions with people from their country:
a) How do you say ‘hello’, ‘welcome’ and ‘thank you’ in their language?

b) What is the polite non-verbal way greet someone ... and are there gender issues to consider?

c) What is the polite way to beckon someone to come with you, sit down etc?

d) And are there common gestures in our culture that are considered offensive in theirs?

e) Is it considered polite or impolite to look someone in the eye when you are talking to them? And are there gender differences?

f) Is it culturally appropriate for you to address questions and instructions to the male head of household?

g) Are there sensitivities about touching children or someone of the opposite sex, and if so, what?

h) Is it important for you as a worker with their community to be very modest in your attire?

i) Are there conventions you should follow when entering a home such as taking shoes off, asking permission to enter etc?

j) Are there conventions about being a guest in someone’s home eg accepting refreshment, commenting (or not) on the home etc?
Topic 7: Working With Clients #2 – Teaching Life Skills:

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

**AIM**: to provide participants with the skills and knowledge that will enable them to:

- conduct a respectful assessment of clients’ prior knowledge and abilities,
- create an environment where people are able to admit they don’t know,
- create a safe space in which people can try new things,
- prioritise the teaching of new skills,
- develop a training plan,
- teach people who have no conceptual constructs to which new learning can be attached,
- build clients’ confidence and independence, and
- assess clients’ acquired competencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduce the topic</td>
<td>Trainer presentation and class discussion</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce the framework for teaching life skills</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying conceptual gaps and strengths</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a safe learning environment</td>
<td>Presentation, activity and discussion</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency based approach to learning</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relevant factors</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.
Introduction

As already discussed, refugees come from an array of countries with different religious, cultural and political values. Many are from developing countries but are settling in industrialised and urbanised societies, others come from privileged backgrounds where they would have had little experience with managing 'daily chores'. When they arrive they dream of legitimising and or reclaiming their identities but find they are once again a minority group.

They do not have knowledge of the things we take for granted – laws, routines, behaviours, common knowledge, and everyday expectations. They don’t know what is normal in Australia, and oftentimes things don’t make sense. For these reasons they end up relying heavily upon empathy from each other and sympathy from the host society to try to negotiate the pattern of life in their new host country.

Refugees who have lived for long periods in refugee camps may also have developed a 'learned helplessness' that has resulted from years of dependency. When they arrive there is the expectation that they learn a whole range of new skills (such as using public transportation, automated banking ...) but for many, this not only means grappling with the new tasks but having to dig very deep within themselves to find the confidence to try something new. This challenge should not be underestimated and considerable patience is required of those whose role it is to teach life skills.

Another thing that caseworkers/trainers need to bear in mind is that entrants’ lack of experience within ‘our world’ will mean that they will view it quite differently. There are so many things we simply take for granted that they will not necessarily grasp. Most caseworkers will be able to provide examples of these conceptual gaps, such as clients who:

- having been told that you heat water in an electric jug and use the microwave to heat things quickly, will put the jug in the microwave to heat the water faster; or
- present with burns to the skin because they are unaware of how to use the taps to get a mix of hot and cold water;
- have fires in their homes because they didn’t recognise the danger of drying clothes over a heater;
- repeatedly set off fire alarms when frying food;
- sleep on top of the sheets because they have never before used sheets; etc

Were we to go and live in an entirely different culture, there is every chance that we too would do all sorts of things the locals would find quite extraordinary. 45

Because some entrants might seem like a fish out of water, it is easy to fall into the trap of underestimating their capacities. Just because entrants lack the skills they need to cope in our world does not mean that they lack skills per se. We must not lose sight of the fact that they do have life skills (many of which ensured their survival) and they do have knowledge – the issue is that the skills and knowledge they have are not

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45 If you haven’t seen it, you might like to get hold of a copy of the film ‘White Masai’. This is about a European woman who marries a Masai warrior and goes to live in his village in Kenya and it is a potent reminder of how skills acquired in one environment will ill-equip you for another.
necessarily useful in Australia and at times can be a hindrance or can place them at risk (as identified in some of the examples above).

**Suggested Activity**

You might wish to introduce the next topic by sharing the following quote from a humanitarian entrant:

'Resettlement is like trying to walk again only you are a lot heavier'.

- What does this person mean by saying this?
- What role can a worker can play to make this a bit easier?

**A Framework for Teaching Life Skills**

The challenges that face those working with refugees and other forced migrants when teaching life skills include:

- understanding the conceptual gaps that the particular entrant is likely to face;
- identifying his/her strengths;
- assessing the entrants’ capacity to absorb unfamiliar concepts and apply these when performing unfamiliar tasks;
- creating a safe space in which entrants can try out new things;
- giving entrants the confidence to admit when they don’t know,
- building a training plan that incorporates the above, which focuses on empowerment and is underpinned by respect for the entrant.

In all of this it is important not to lose sight of the Department of Social Services’ Humanitarian Settlement Service Principles (as covered in Topic 3) which specify that workers should:

- promote humanitarian entrants’ competence,
- discourage dependence,
- involve entrants in making choices and decisions.

Further, it is necessary to recognise that settlement is a staged process. It is, therefore, important (for both the entrant and the host society) not to overload entrants and raise expectations too soon after arrival in Australia. People absorb information based on a ‘hierarchy of needs’, so any information that does not fit within this ‘hierarchy of need’ is unlikely to be absorbed and therefore will not be useful.⁴⁶

Let’s unpack these issues.

Understanding Each Entrant’s Conceptual Gaps

The first step to teaching life skills is assessing what the entrants know and how they view the world. This really is a skill that comes with experience but there are many things a worker can draw upon to enhance their capacity to do this, not least through:

- doing some research into the lifestyle the entrants probably had (in a camp or settlement) and in their country of origin. The sorts of things you need to consider when doing this include whether they are from an urban or rural background, how familiar they are likely to be with the things they will encounter in an Australian home etc;

- talking to the entrants, asking very practical questions about how and in what they lived (eg did they live in a house, flat, hut ... did they have electricity, running water ...);

- observing the way they react to and interact with people and things they encounter.

And once you have done all this, you need to put yourself in their shoes and try to see the new world through their eyes. Only then can you begin to engage with entrants in a way that will truly meet their needs.

Identifying Strengths

Recognising individuals’ strengths, talents, attributes and skills is more likely to inspire energy for change rather than focusing on needs and problems. Seeing the glass half-full instead of half-empty does not deny the real problems that forced migrants face but it does focus energy on how each person can participate positively in meeting their settlement needs and charting their personal development.

A good place to start exploring entrants’ strengths is by asking them about their hobbies or favourite pastimes. In their answers it is possible that you will find many strengths and interests. They may be great communicators, which could lead to bicultural or volunteer work with their communities. They may love organizing, or be good cooks, have built their own homes, maybe they are great with children, can paint or draw.... These are all useful and transferable skills that can be built upon.

It is often useful to help entrants build an inventory of their assets and encourage them to see value in resources that would otherwise have been unrealised, or dismissed. Remind them that ‘assets’ can also include relationships among people through social and informal networks, as well as more formal structures such as community-based organisations and private enterprise. These relationships fuel local associations and informal networks and can be very valuable to having skills and knowledge recognised and utilised.47

Suggested Activity

Get the participants to work in groups to answer the following:

- How can you ‘locate the energy for change’ in your clients, focusing on their strengths rather than deficiencies?

From Clients to Citizens: Asset-Based Community Development as a Strategy for Community-Driven Development, Alison Mathie and Gord Cunningham, 2002.

www.mystfx.ca/institutes/coady/text/about_publications_occasional_citizens.html
• How can you ensure that the strengths of individuals are valued and legitimated?

• How can you facilitate a process that encourages pride in past success and results in community members' engagement and commitment?

Creating a Safe Learning Environment

Despite the fact that most entrants will have had some exposure to how things operate in Australia through their cultural orientation training (AUSCO), the reality is that they will still face a steep learning curve when they arrive. They will frequently be in a position where they have to admit that they don’t know, don’t understand and feel at a total loss:

• An elder may be wise in the old ways of culture or religion, and yet have no knowledge of laws in the new country, and may have to reestablish a place in the community from scratch.

• Parents can draw on their own life experience, which may be culturally specific, while children come home from school with other interpretations of their rights which differ widely from those of their country of origin.

• Adolescents may want advice from their parents and elders to help them negotiate their way into adulthood in their new environment, but parents are unable to help because they don’t understand/trust the Australian systems, culture and values.

Being displaced from your comfort zone is distressing and disempowering, especially for people who have experienced significant loss and who have to rebuild a future in a totally unfamiliar environment. Workers need to aspire to provide a safe space for people to discuss confusion, difficulties, learning new ways, integrating old and new knowledge and sharing experiences and wisdom.

Suggested Activity

Brainstorm what a ‘safe space’ might mean in the context of teaching life skills and how this can be created.

Some of the things that you should be looking for when it comes to creating a ‘safe space’ in a learning context are:

• being very clear yourself about what you want to convey;
• beginning with the simplest tasks/concepts;
• ensuring that instructions are very clear;
• breaking tasks/concepts into their component parts and dealing with each in sequential order;
• thinking about other ways the entrant might perceive things and taking steps to steer the person in the right direction;
• giving lots of positive reinforcement;
• checking comprehension in a respectful way;
• reinforcing the importance of asking questions and admitting confusion;
• thinking of different ways to explain the same concept if you feel that the first way did not get through;
• eliciting the help of bicultural workers;
• being patient.
When discussing this list, there are a couple of things to which additional emphasis should be given:

- The importance of employing a **scaffolding approach** to teaching new skills. This will help build client’s confidence and independence. By getting clients to practice on low risk scenarios first, if they don’t succeed, the consequences are minimal and there will be no shame.

- The necessity of respect and patience. A worker who shows – through words or non-verbal clues – that s/he thinks the entrant is ‘dumb’ for not understanding or is angry or frustrated, will get nowhere and simply alienate and disempower the entrant.

- The important role that bicultural workers can play. We all know that the people we feel most comfortable with are the people ‘most like us’ – people who understand our background, our values, even our sense of humour … in fact people who see the world through the same eyes we do. To confirm this, all you need to do is go to Earls Court in London and listen to the conversations of the young Australians in which the peculiar habits of ‘the English’ feature prominently. Entrants might be far more likely to open up and divulge issues and concerns to someone to whom they can identify closely – if it is the ‘right someone’. Pairing a client with a bicultural worker from the wrong ethnic or religious background will have the exactly the opposite effect to that intended and could well be highly detrimental.

It is also good to remember that one of the best ways to create an environment where people are able to admit that they do not know is to model this behaviour yourself. When you do not know something, admit it and explain how you will find out the information.

### Discussion Topic

Ask whether the participants know the television commercial in which a boy asks his father why they built the Great Wall of China and whether they can remember what he answers (‘to keep the rabbits out’).

Discuss:

- Why he gave this answer.
- The problem with this response.
- The possible consequences of this response.
- What a better response might have been in this case.
- How this principle might be applied when working with newly arrived refugees.

### A Competency-Based Approach to Learning

The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) is a strong advocate for teaching settlement life skills using a client-focused, **competency-based approach** rather than employing a **tick box approach** to information delivery. They go on to explain that:

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48 A scaffolding approach involves starting with small tasks then building up incrementally to more complex tasks as new skills are acquired, all the time supporting the entrant but working towards a time when the support can be removed when the entrant is able to cope unaided.
Whilst on the surface the two approaches may appear to deliver the same outcomes, there are significant differences between them. Using the example of teaching a newly arrived client to catch the bus, the ‘tick box’ approach might involve taking the person to buy their bus ticket, showing them the local bus stop and pointing the bus out to them, and then recording that the client now knows how to take the bus.

On the other hand, using a competency-based approach to developing settlement life skills, a worker would find out what the client already knows about catching the bus, any problems or hurdles they may face in catching the bus, assist the person to develop their skills in reading place names, timetables etc, and ensure that the person is able to replicate the experience of catching a bus on their own, to different places and so on.49

Further, using a competency-based approach to learning helps refugees recognise, use and build on their existing skills and strengths as opposed to a deficit model which treats refugees as victims and fails to recognise that, in order to have made it thus far, they have amassed a considerable range of skills and strengths which, if refocused, can be turned to their benefit in Australia.

Suggested Activity

Divide the class into an even number of groups of 3 or 4 people. Explain that each group will be given a teaching task and one group will be required to work out how to teach that task using a competency-based model and the its ‘pair’ will do the same thing using a tick box approach.

The tasks you might wish to consider assigning to ‘pairs’ of groups include:

- using an automatic teller machine,
- household budgeting,
- looking for a house to rent,
- cleaning the bathroom; etc.

Ask the groups to present the different versions of the same plan and discuss these.

Other Relevant Factors

Varying the Medium of Delivery

Just as teachers know that it is important to vary their teaching style to accommodate the various learning styles of their students, so too do those teaching life skills have to recognise that their clients will have different ways of absorbing and assimilating information50 and will have varying levels of literacy. It is therefore important for them to

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50 Everybody has a preferred learning style. Some people are visual learners while others are auditory learners; some need to ask lots of questions while others prefer to passively absorb new information; some can read/listen to something and remember it while others have to make notes … and so the list goes on.
have at their disposal a variety of different learning strategies and resources, especially if it is their primary role to teach new skills or impart information.

Fortunately more and more resources are being developed to help out and this area, including but by no means limited to flash cards, multilingual information sheets, posters and DVDs. The key thing for workers is to find out what resources are out there – familiarise themselves with these and then use them wisely. Rather than simply using the same training tools all the time, workers should have their ‘box of tricks’ from which they can pull a resource that, upon careful consideration of who the clients are, will best meet their needs.

**Assessment of Acquired Competencies**

Service providers typically use their own benchmarks to assess whether clients have acquired the core competencies to build autonomy in daily routines. Assessments can be conducted using activities such as role plays, observations, simulated situations and client quizzes, but must not be conducted in a way that will intimidate clients. It is not a test. Service providers can also refer clients to other organisations to assist them to develop these competencies further.

**Skills Development Programs**

There are a variety of government and non-government programs that have been developed to help refugees and other forced migrants acquire the skills they need to function effectively and autonomously within Australian society. Two of the key areas targeted are orientation and English language.

**Orientation:**

DSS has recognised a skills and knowledge gap that should be addressed in all newly arrived refugees as part of the settlement plan, and included provision for orientation within its Humanitarian Settlement Services package. It is designed to develop the practical skills and knowledge that will build self confidence and an understanding of key information and processes in Australia.

The program focuses on developing core competencies that entrants need to become integrated and autonomous faster. Individual needs and abilities can be factored into the training. These competencies include:

- finding information and accessing services,
- making an appointment,
- using transport,
- money management,
- tenancy issues,
- employment and education, and
- Australian law.

There will also be consideration of helping entrants to develop more realistic expectations of how things happen here. Due to their limited understanding of the host culture, many refugees have unrealistic expectations, especially regarding housing and employment.
**English Language**

Lack of competency in English is one of the most common settlement stressors facing refugees and it is also something that can be easily measured. English language proficiency correlates directly with refugees' feelings of alienation from or connection with the wider society. Proficiency promotes good mental health by facilitating social contact, thereby enlarging the individual's repertoire of coping strategies.\(^{51}\)

All refugees are entitled to 510 hours English language tuition, and refugee youth aged between 16-24 who have had less than 7 years formal education, are entitled to an additional 400 hours of English language tuition before those 510 hours. Centrelink also offers its clients 140 hours additional Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) classes to refugees if they recognise a needs gap.

**Resources**


**Coming together: Two cultures, one life. Community Development with Sudanese Refugees: A Case Study.** VFST. Melbourne. 2006  

**Clients to Citizens: Asset-Based Community Development as a Strategy for Community-Driven Development.** Alison Mathie and Gord Cunningham, 2002.  

**Collaborative Responsibility: A Capacity Building Approach based on research with recently arrived Muslim men.** Chafic W F. Auburn Migrant Resource Centre. 2008.  

**Participant Activities**

1. In this topic we spoke about a ‘safe space’ for learning. Write down 5 things that make a safe learning space for you:

2. It is your responsibility to train a new entrant in using a microwave oven. How are you going to do this?

3. What sort of things might someone who has never used a microwave do in error and how are you going to minimise the chances that this might happen?

4. You are a caseworker for a Job Skills Australia provider and your client has a job interview four suburbs away. He is very anxious about getting lost on his way to

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the interview and/or arriving late. How will you go about using competency based instruction to prepare him for the journey by public transport to his interview?

5. Get hold of one of your household bills (telephone, electricity, gas etc). Imagine that this is the bill belonging to one of your clients and she is concerned that she cannot pay the full amount because her baby has been sick and she has big medical bills. Your task is to give her step by step advice about how she can deal with this. HINT: begin by locating the phone number to call, the account number, the name of the account holder … and then move onto what she might say. Write down what you would say to your client:
Topic 8: Working With Clients #3 – Effective Client Engagement:

### TOPIC 8: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY

**AIM:** to provide participants with the skills and knowledge that will enable them to:
- understand things from another person’s perspective;
- show respect for people from different cultures and backgrounds;
- ensure that privacy laws are adhered to and client confidences are respected;
- recognise that some people will take time to acquire new skills and knowledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding things from another’s perspective</td>
<td>Presentation, activity and story</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing respect</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy and confidentiality</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of skills acquisition</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and overcoming obstacles</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
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</tbody>
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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.

### Understanding Things from another’s Perspective

Before you can put yourself in someone else’s shoes, you have to recognise your own shoes (metaphorically speaking of course). In Topic 5 we explored the issue of ‘culture’ but did so in the context of thinking of ‘culture’ as something that the entrants have. It is true that they do, but so do we ... although we often don’t recognise it. Very simplistically, the culture in which we grew up plays a large part in defining:
• the way we view the world;
• our attitudes to others;
• the choices we make;
• our capacity to deal with change; and
• the way we respond to things and people.

And in this context, when we speak of ‘culture’ we are not just talking about the culture of Australia (or your country of origin) but also the culture of your family, friends, locality (inner city, suburban, rural ...), religion, groups to which you belong etc etc. All of these influences combine to make us the people we are ... and most significantly in this context, they also combine to shape the way we view the world and interact with others.

**Suggested Activity**

Ask the participants to recall the Cultural Iceberg introduced in Topic 5 and explain the difference between the observable aspects of one’s culture (above the water) and the hidden aspects (below the water). It’s up to you but you might like to use some examples from your own life to explain the concepts.

Ask the participants to draw their own ‘cultural iceberg’ and fill in the things that have influenced their lives. Give them the option of doing this individually or in pairs and explain at the outset that they will not be required to divulge anything they do not want to to the class ... this is after all an exercise for them to REFLECT DEEPLY on the things that have shaped their lives. Suggest that they might want to take their iceberg home and add to it over the coming week when they think of new things.

Before leaving this exercise, invite any participants who feel comfortable to do so to share their reflections (reminding others that these should be treated as confidential). As participants disclose, pose the question ‘is this something that will have an impact on how clients view you?’

It is important to flag too that it is not just our culture that defines us and the way we perceive and are perceived by others. In Topic 12 we will look at this issue in more detail and consider the influence of age, gender, race and other defining characteristics.

Understanding the influence of culture and identity on shaping the way we operate is a crucial first step to recognising that the things we do and the way we do them are not ‘right’ or ‘normal’ *per se*. If we think this way, it is easy to slip into being judgemental about other ways of doing things, thinking that they are ‘wrong’ or ‘abnormal’ whereas in fact they are perfectly ‘normal’ to people from another cultural background. Just think of how we unquestioningly accept the notion that the New Year begins on 1st January. Over 1.3 billion people in China would beg to differ on this score, as would millions in the Middle East, South Asia and elsewhere.

Once we have begun to come to grips with who we are, we can begin to think about how our clients might perceive things. Like us, they too are influenced by their culture and their life experiences. Being able to see things through another’s eyes is a skill honed over time and assisted by exposure to people from many different cultures. There are, however, some things we can do to build these skills. These include but are by no means limited to:

✔ finding out as much as you can about people with a profile similar to that of your clients – their background, the experiences they might have had etc. How to do this was discussed in Topic 6. And as you are doing your research, don’t fall into the trap of thinking that everyone from a particular country is the same. Look out for differences
defined by clan membership, ethnicity, religion, gender or any other significant defining characteristic;

✓ carefully observing your clients, focusing in particular on their level of confidence, the way in which they interact with you and with each other, and their reactions to the things you are saying to them;

✓ talking to your clients, getting to know them and a little about their own personal background (as opposed to the generic information you have discovered about people from similar backgrounds);

✓ taking time out to reflect on all of the above to create a world view from your client’s perspective.

In other words – it’s all about empathy.

NOTE: If using the above story, be mindful not to give the impression that all refugees come from impoverished backgrounds or vastly different cultures.

There is a story (possibly real, possibly apocryphal) about a newly arrived entrant standing in the lobby of a tall city building. When questioned about what he was doing, he explained that he needed to go to the 23rd floor and that someone had directed him to the metal doors but he was afraid to go through them. Further questioning elicited that he had been watching these metal doors and had observed that a man would walk through them and when they opened again, a woman – or a group of people - would come out. The only explanation was that these were doors to a magic box and he was deeply afraid of going through them, fearful of what he would look like when he emerged.

For this man, magic made far more sense than the notion that there might be a machine that carried people to unimaginable heights at considerable speed ... i.e. the lifts that we simply take for granted.

Showing Respect

Everyone likes to be treated with respect and refugees are no exception. In fact for them, being treated with respect is even more important than for the rest of us because this is something that has been missing from their lives for quite some time.

Show the section of (then) DIAC’s Asian Settlement DVD in which a young man from Myanmar talks about his reaction to being called ‘sir’ by a taxi driver. If you do not have the DVD, you can download it from: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DS2TMGYdGgA. The relevant segment can be found 6m36 into the video.

Being respectful towards another person has to begin deep within oneself and is linked to how we perceive the other person. This is why we spent time focusing on empathy in the earlier discussion. Our views of the other person play a large part in shaping the way we interact with them – both verbally and non-verbally. For instance, someone you
dislike can usually detect that the sweet words you utter and the smile on your face are just presence.

There are also a number of other things that you can do to demonstrate respect. These include:

- calling clients by their preferred names and ensuring you pronounce them correctly;
- respecting power dynamics within the family;
- framing questions in a non-judgmental way;
- using verbal encouragement;
- adopting a supportive role;
- providing assistance in the form of concrete/tangible services and as quickly as possible;
- understanding and identifying your client’s critical cultural values and beliefs, especially where it concerns parenting, family relationships, child support etc;
- asking clients what their preferences are for any actions.

Similarly, there are a number of things that you should avoid doing, including:

- employing an interrogatory style when gathering information or asking questions, remembering that closed questions (those with yes/no answers) can often be seen as more abrupt;
- using complicated or pompous language;
- using overly simplistic (‘baby’) language;
- asking for any more information (especially personal information or details of past experiences) than you need;
- asking clients to repeat traumatic stories unnecessarily;
- using interview rooms with closed-in spaces and barred windows.

These things could well trigger flashbacks and adverse reactions and in so doing, will undermine any rapport you have with the client.

Before leaving this section it is important to reflect on the impact of interpreters in this process. The reality is that in many instances, workers will not be interacting with their clients directly but will be doing so through an interpreter or bicultural worker. This adds another dimension and there are certain things one should keep in mind:

- Be careful to select an appropriate interpreter and/or caseworker, i.e. ensuring that sensitivities related to gender, ethnicity, religion and other salient features have been considered. This will be discussed in more detail in Topic 11.
- Be vigilant for any signs that the client is uncomfortable with the interpreter or is having difficulty understanding. Even if you don’t know a single word of the language, you can look out for non-verbal clues.
- Be ‘present’ when things are being translated, i.e. look interested and engaged and don’t go rummaging in your papers, check the computer etc unless there is a good reason for you to do this.

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Focus on the client. Again as will be discussed in Topic 11, when you are speaking, look at the client, not the interpreter. Similarly, look at the client when the interpreter is telling you what the client said. This way the client can see your reactions and feel that s/he is the person you are primarily interested in, not the interpreter.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

When working with refugees and other forced migrants it is likely that you will soon discover that you are confronting two competing agendas:

- your need to get information from the clients in order to assess their needs and provide appropriately targeted assistance;
- your clients’ suspicions about disclosing information because they don’t really know you and are not sure how trustworthy you might be.

Many refugees quite literally owe their lives to their ability to keep information secret ... even from family members and close friends. They have learned from bitter experience that people have various reasons for collecting information and that disclosing too much to the wrong person can be very dangerous indeed.

In order to break through this natural reticence it is important to:

- explain carefully why you are asking the questions you are asking;
- make sure that all of the questions you ask are relevant to your work and do not seek unrelated information;
- recognise that gaining the clients’ trust is fundamental;
- actively engage and consult with the client in the planning process;
- be aware that the client might not fully disclose in the first instance ... instead beginning by telling you a little bit of the story to test the waters and only once you have proved to be trustworthy, will more be divulged;
- explain that there are very strict privacy laws in Australia that govern the collection, storage and disclosure of information;
- reinforce the above by explaining that the agency for which you work also has a privacy policy;
- be aware where your support and advocacy may be necessary (even if the refugee may not sufficiently trust you to ask for help);
- most importantly of all, strictly adhere to your obligations as a worker not to disclose any personal information about a client to anyone who does not have a legitimate right to know.

This being said, it is necessary for workers to be mindful of the exceptions to confidentiality. For example, if clients reveal that they are behaving in a way that is contrary to Australian law, especially concerning child protection issues, by law service

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54 Which it is legally required to have.
providers have obligations\textsuperscript{55} to report their concerns. The impact of this on a worker will of course depend on the nature of their work. Those likely to confront such issues should be receiving workplace instruction on procedures. In addition, there are relevant courses in the National Training Framework\textsuperscript{56} and state government agencies offer courses that cover mandatory reporting guidelines.

**Rate of Acquisition of Skills and Knowledge**

If you were to gather together a group of people collected randomly from the street, you would not be at all surprised to discover that within the group there were marked differences in their capacity to absorb and apply new information. It is somewhat surprising then when you encounter training programs for refugees that are ‘one size fits all’ – after all, the range of individual differences within a group of refugees is likely to be just as marked as those in the group randomly gathered on the street.

There will be people who:

- have had more education than others,  
- are more or less intelligent than the norm,  
- are confident and outgoing,  
- are fearful in unfamiliar settings,  
- like challenges,  
- are tired, depressed or not feeling well ...

Each of these factors will influence the ability of the person to learn new concepts.

Then, in addition to the individual differences that occur within any population, the situation and experiences of refugees and other forced migrants add additional layers of complexity to their capacity to absorb and assimilate new information – not all of which are hindrances. On the one hand, these entrants:

- are operating in an unfamiliar environment and do not necessarily have the conceptual links to which new information can easily be attached. These conceptual links greatly assist you to learn, for example, if you have never seen a pear but are familiar with apples, a pear ‘makes sense’ because it is quite similar to an apple but if the only fruit you have ever seen is a banana, the notion that a pear might also be a fruit is harder to comprehend;
- could be coming from highly gendered cultures where the roles of men and women, in particular in relation to dealing with outsiders, are clearly defined and women face many practical and/or conceptual constraints;
- might have been disempowered by their past experience, especially if they have spent long periods in camps where they had few opportunities to make decisions, plan for the future or make choices.

\textsuperscript{55} States and territories have slightly different mandatory reporting obligations.  
\textsuperscript{56} Including but not limited to:  
CHCYTH2C: Provide care and protection for young people  
CHCYTH4C: Support young people in crisis  
CHCDFV8B: Provide support to children affected by domestic and family violence  
CHCDFV7B: Provide domestic and family violence support in non-English speaking background communities.
• could well be hampered by the effects of trauma (see Topic 12) which include inability to concentrate, disrupted sleep, hyper-vigilance, irritability etc.

On the other hand, we have to recognise that the refugees who come to Australia are survivors. It is a given that they have skills that have enabled them to surmount huge obstacles and depths of courage we can only imagine. They have also had to adapt to new situations and deal with uncertainty.

Then there is another dimension that must be added to all this – English proficiency. Not surprisingly, entrants who can interact (even at a basic level) in English are likely to have both the capacity and confidence to pick up new skills and knowledge faster than those who do not.

So what does all of this mean for workers? For a start there has to be recognition of individual differences. There are two key dimensions to this:

• workers have to be **patient**: they need to accept that some clients will take longer than others to absorb information and they must not allow their frustration to show. All this will do is to further disempower their clients and make it harder for them to learn;

• ‘one size does not fit all’: no one type of information provision will work for all clients so, as mentioned previously, workers have to have a wide repertoire of training devices on which they can draw.

In addition (and noting that there is an element of repetition in this), workers need to:

• use the information they have gathered about their client to assess their capacity to learn new concepts and ways of operating in the new environment;

• be observant when teaching new skills, focusing in particular on trying to identify the things that the entrants are finding particularly challenging and on the way they respond to particular training techniques;

• present information in a staged way that builds on their strengths, confirming that a concept is understood before moving to the next;

• be flexible and ensure that what they are saying/doing is the most appropriate approach for that client rather than the easiest one for the worker.

**Suggested Activity**

Make a slide from the following image or find similar pictures.
Draw attention to the very different backgrounds of these two people. Ask the participants to tell you what they can deduce simply by looking at the photos. The sort of answers you should be looking for are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Woman</th>
<th>Two Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy</td>
<td>Tribal background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably well educated</td>
<td>Probably minimal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar with western tech</td>
<td>Little exposure to western life ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask the question: would the women or the men find it easier to settle in Australia?

The answer is that they all face significant challenges – but different ones.

The woman clearly comes from a privileged background and before she was forced to flee her homeland, it is probable that she had a very nice house with maids, a cook, a chauffeur, gardeners and other help. She would have been treated with respect by others and been able to buy anything she wanted. In Australia she has no status, little money and no help in the home.

The men would have to learn a great deal about living in a western community. Technology would be unfamiliar to them. But unlike the woman, they would be very aware that they have to learn and change, and their previous life as shifting cultivators is likely to have given them skills in flexibility, resourcefulness and managing change.

So it’s not as simple as one might first suspect. Remind the class about the importance of not making quick assumptions about people.

While there are many things you can learn about clients from observation, these have to be tested. Further, the first impression they get when the refugees step off the plane with all their worldly goods in plastic bags is not the full picture.
Go back to the pictures and ask the participants what approach they would take to working with the woman and the men if they were their clients. How would they adapt their approach to reflect their different backgrounds? What things would they need to focus on most?

**References**


Settlement DVD: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=DS2TMGYdGgA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DS2TMGYdGgA)

National Cultural Competency Tool (NCCT) for Mental Health Services. Multicultural Mental Health Australia, 2010.

**Participant Activities**

1. If you can, obtain and watch the film ‘White Masai’. As you are watching it, reflect on the lessons it contains about the way people from different backgrounds view the world very differently and how competency in one culture does not translate to competency in another.

2. Think of a time when you have felt ‘out of your depth’. This might have been when you were in another country or possibly at a party or event when you looked around the room and realised you did not know a sole. Or maybe there was another time. How did you feel? What did you do? Did anything happen that made things easier for you?

3. What might be some of the consequences of disclosing personal information about your client to the wrong person(s)?

4. Obtain a copy of the mandatory reporting guidelines in your state/territory. What are the key lessons for you in these?

5. Do a web search to find out:
   - which agencies in your state/territory run courses about mandatory reporting;
   - when the next course is scheduled.
Topic 9: Working With Clients #4 – Developing and Implementing a Settlement Plan

TOPIC 8: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY

**AIM:** to provide participants with the skills and knowledge that will enable them to:

- develop and implement a settlement plan;
- solve problems, especially in the context of finding solutions for complex issues raised by clients;
- recognise the variables that will affect an entrant’s wellbeing;
- understand the importance of competency in use of computer-based applications for work in the settlement sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlement plans</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables impacting on refugees’ wellbeing</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using information technology</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>Group or whole class activity</td>
<td>50 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.

**Settlement Plans**

In Topic 3 we explored the meaning of ‘settlement’, noting that most agree that it is a process rather than a fixed point in time and its definition is neither fixed in concrete nor precise. This being said, for the purpose of this session it is useful to simplify things by focusing on the definition of settlement used by the Department of Immigration:⁵⁷

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

The process of adjustment explicit in this definition is not something that an entrant can achieve unassisted, in large part because of their unfamiliarity with the range of services available in Australia. Instead they are supported through this process and settlement plans provide the cornerstones of this support.

Not everyone working in the settlement sector will be required to develop a settlement plan – in fact this is largely the role of case managers involved in initial settlement support and, in a slightly different way, of the workers who are involved in crisis intervention. Irrespective of whether settlement plans are your ‘core business’ it is very important to know what they are, how they are developed and how those providing ancillary services are linked to them.

The agencies funded by the Department of Social Services (under the Humanitarian Settlement Services – or HSS - program) to provide initial assistance to newly arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants are required to develop settlement plans for each of their clients. Each agency will do this slightly differently but essentially will follow a process that involves:

i. **Undertaking an Assessment of Client Needs**

To do this a range of things are considered and resources drawn upon, not least:

- the information received from DIBP about the entrant(s);
- information received from AUSCO trainers about the group of which they are a part;
- the entrant’s visa category,\(^{58}\)noting in particular that:
  - entrants carrying a visa subclass 203 or 204 are likely to have complex settlement needs due to high levels of trauma, as well as a possible need for medical (especially gynaecological) intervention;
  - those with a visa subclass 866 are likely to have quite a different profile. A significant proportion of those holding visa subclass 866 visas (Onshore Protection Visas) are men who have arrived by boat and whose wives and children remain in a country of first asylum or in their home country. Typically this is a highly mobile population whose priority is family reunification and who put their own settlement needs on hold until this is achieved;
- research undertaken about the background of entrants with a similar profile (as described in Topic 6);
- the post-arrival assessment of entrants’ needs and, where relevant (i.e. in the case of entrants with a visa subclass 202), the proposer's capacity to meet these needs. As discussed in Topic 6, agencies have set procedures for conducting such assessments;
- particular consideration of the needs of individuals within a family group (i.e. the needs assessment should not only look at the adults but also at young people, children and infants), noting that their needs will differ.

\(^{58}\) The various visa categories were explained in Topic 2.
ii. Drafting a Settlement Plan

After careful consideration of the needs of the entrants, work can begin on developing a settlement plan. The framework for this is defined both by DSS’s requirements for the provision of services and each agency’s own procedures.

Key features of a settlement plan should include:

- its specificity to the needs of the individual or family group;
- a reflection of any need for gender-specific, ethno-specific, faith-specific or other specific services;
- sufficient flexibility to accommodate changing circumstances;
- effective engagement of relevant local services to complement those provided by the HSS provider;
- clearly defined roles for the various agencies involved in its implementation;
- clear communication channels between these agencies;
- mechanisms to connect the entrant(s) to social, cultural and religious networks and community support structures;
- measurable outcomes linked to attainment of competency.

In addition, it is considered **essential** that a settlement plan should be:

- client focused – i.e. it should meet the needs of the entrant rather than the convenience of the agency/worker;
- developed in consultation with the entrant(s). This is an important part of the process of empowerment, allowing entrants to play an active role in decision making and planning for their future.

iii. Implementation

The settlement plan is, in effect, a plan for action. A good settlement plan will set out what needs to be done, in what order and by whom, so implementing a settlement plan should be a fairly straight forward process, not discounting however, the need for careful monitoring and revision if circumstances change.

During the implementation stage, there are some important things that should underpin the interactions between all workers who engage with the entrants (not just the principal caseworker) and the entrants. In relation to their interaction with the entrant(s), everyone in a supporting role needs to:

- be clear and transparent about their role and its boundaries;
- clearly articulate their clients’ rights/responsibilities;
- emphasise confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality;
- be consistent and predictable;
- deliver and follow through on undertakings;
- provide practical and tangible assistance;
- provide extra time for interactions with various family members;
- recognise the importance of working as part of a team.

iii. Assessing Outcomes

For quite some time the milestones used to measure settlement services related to whether the entrant was provided with certain information or given certain things. It was recognised, however, that this did little to develop the independence that is seen as fundamental to settlement. For example, an entrant might be given a brochure that tells
them how to catch a bus but if they can’t read or do not understand what they have read or lack the confidence to venture forth alone, the whole exercise is pointless.

 Appropriately the emphasis has shifted to an assessment of competency, with an expectation that consideration be given as to whether entrants can demonstrate that they can perform certain tasks before competencies are considered to have been met. Extending the example given above, the competency would not be the provision of information about using a bus but the entrant successfully completing a journey by bus.

 Each funded agency delivering initial settlement services is required to have in place a strategy to assess client outcomes and those working within this agency will be trained about its use.

**Other Workers**

So what about the myriad of people who encounter newly arrived refugees and other forced migrants but who do not work for the agencies delivering initial settlement assistance … what do they need to know about settlement plans and why are they relevant for them?

The key lessons are as follows:

- it is important that they know that agencies are being funded by DSS through the Humanitarian Settlement Services program to assess the post-arrival needs of refugees and humanitarian entrants and develop a holistic plan to address short-term settlement needs;

- while they might not be responsible for developing settlement plans, they are relevant to them;

- most entrants have a caseworker (supported by a casemanager) and this person has the best understanding of the ‘total picture’ with respect to the entrant and an overview of the services to which they have been linked;

- if there are concerns about an entrant, it is important to contact the casemanager and discuss these with them;

- they are not the sole worker involved with the entrant. They need to see themselves as part of a team and ensure that their interventions complement rather than conflict with support provided by others working with the entrant.
Problem Solving

When seeking solutions to the problems and challenges refugees encounter when they come to Australia, it is necessary to remember that there is no one size fits all solution. The problems refugees confront can be very complex and can range from unreasonably high expectations of life in the receiving country, to gender and equality issues, relationship breakdowns, children at risk, prior trauma or basic survival problems like accommodation and health issues. Bearing in mind that a key objective of settlement services is to build your clients’ capacity to participate autonomously in Australian society, the challenge for workers is to support entrants work through these problems in a way that not only resolves the problems but also leaves them with the skills and knowledge to respond with greater competency and capacity to future problems when they arise.

A few things to keep in mind when assisting refugees with problem solving:

- **Build trust with the client so that they will be willing to open up and work with you in solution planning.** There may be more to the problem than appears on the surface.

- **Elicit only enough information as is relevant to understand the issues and make the appropriate referrals, especially where trauma becomes evident.** Unless you are a trained counsellor, be wary of asking clients to elaborate on painful memories that may cause the trauma to resurface.

- **Do not become the rescuer, because the final outcome must be that the client is moving closer to self-sufficiency.** Instead mentor where you can and refer clients to the appropriate specialist services.

- **Contact community leaders and educate the community where it is appropriate to do so.** Often the best way to teach individuals is to do it through their own community members.

New entrants have little idea about what is normal and what is not and therefore their suspicions (regarding discrimination) and doubts (regarding integration) are heightened. As service providers you can help to normalise problems and link entrants to community and other support services. Collaborative working relationships with other service providers and community organisations will help achieve sustainable settlement outcomes for refugee clients.

Facilitating learning opportunities is also important for new entrants. Many entrants struggle with conflicting demands, such as childcare and other responsibilities at the expense of participating in planned activities. To encourage greater participation in programs that help refugees learn about the social, education, health and legal systems in Australia, service providers also need to consider childcare and transport needs.
Variables Impacting on Refugees' Wellbeing

There are many variables that impact refugees and create obstacles to settlement. In order to identify root causes and address problems systematically, it is essential to get a holistic overview of factors influencing your client’s wellbeing. There are many ways of doing this and, as previously mentioned, agencies typically have assessment tools they encourage staff members to use. The following table will hopefully provide you with useful conceptual and practical framework to help you explore with the participants the myriad of factors that underpin a refugee’s experience and unpacking the problems s/he is facing.59

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Using Information Technology

How you approach this section should be determined by the profile of the participants in the class. If the class is made up of people who have been educated in Australia and are both comfortable with and proficient in the use of information technology, you can possibly skip over it very quickly.

If, on the other hand, the participants are primarily people from forced migrant backgrounds with little familiarity with computers and other forms of information technology, this part of the session should be given considerable emphasis. The reason for this is that in almost all forms of settlement-related work, there is requirement that staff use computers for a variety of functions including but not limited to:

- accessing and recording client data;
- undertaking research;
- developing a settlement plan;
- recording client interventions;
- developing budgets;
- communicating by email with other service providers;
- writing letters of support;
- reporting to supervisors;
- completing time sheets;
- requesting leave; etc

For those who come from a background where offices are paper-based or where they have had little or no exposure to office work, the reliance on computer-based technology can seem incomprehensible and the expectation that they use it can be very daunting.

Possibly the best way to begin confronting these barriers is to explain why computer-based technology is valuable in this type of work, highlighting in particular the way it enables:

- access to an enormous array of information for research;
- client information to be stored in a clear, concise and secure manner;
- information to be shared amongst relevant workers;
- efficient collaboration and prevents duplication of effort;
- easy collation of data for reports to funding bodies;
- accessible storage of contact details;
- personal organisation through use of calendar functions,
- easy communication with colleagues and other services;
- systematic collection of the information required to ensure workers get paid.

Baseline IT skills for settlement workers are:

- word processing;
- emails;
- data entry;
- use of spreadsheets;
- undertaking web-based research (e.g. using Google, Bing etc).

A separate but related issue is competency in written English. People might have very good verbal skills but find writing, in particular when using a computer, very challenging.

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60 It is acknowledged that this is very different to the other skills covered in this topic and you might wish to think about how and where it is covered. The important point to bear in mind is that it is an essential employability skill in the settlement sector and participants need to be aware of why they need these skills.
This has a significant impact on their ability to make effective use of the technology that is an integral part of their role.

If you have participants in your class who you know or suspect do not have sufficient proficiency in computer-based technology and/or written English to cope with the tasks outlined above, it would be very useful if you can gather some information about courses in the local area in which participants could enrol. Participants might also be able to contribute some suggestions. Further you need to stress to these participants that:

- familiarity with and competence using a variety of IT applications is essential in the settlement sector and their ability to secure and retain employment will be dependent on them having these skills;
- the ability to write simple reports and support letters in English on a computer is also an essential skill for work in the settlement sector;
- it is their responsibility to take the initiative to build up these skills.

**Suggested Activity**

*NOTE: This activity relates to the development of a settlement plan but has been placed at the end of the unit so that you can ensure the core information is covered and then use all available remaining time for the activity.*

Following are a number of case studies which you could use in a variety of ways. Depending on the group, the time available and/or your preferred training style, you might like to divide the class into groups/pairs and give each group a case study to discuss or you might wish to have a group discussion about one or more of the case studies.

Irrespective of which approach you take, you might wish to frame the activity as follows:

i. List a range of responses or actions that the settlement worker could take.  
ii. Having listed the responses then rate them on the scale from ‘too helpful to not helpful’.  
iii. The extremes would be the person who tries to ‘rescue’ on the one end to the person who ‘takes no responsibility’ on the other end.

Too helpful ______________________________________ Not helpful

*After discussing some of the case studies try to come up with a list of strategies that are useful when approaching problems.*

**Case Studies:**

A settlement worker, Judy is involved in the following cases. Discuss what some responses that Judy can make are and what actions can she take.

**Case studies relating to family issues:**

a. Late one evening Judy receives a phone call from a refugee client. The client is crying and very upset. She says she has been fighting with her husband over a
number of credit card purchases that the husband has made. Her husband has now left the house and she is afraid that he might not come back.

b. Judy is aware that her client Reba is suffering physical and sexual abuse from her husband. She has put her in touch with DV services and women’s health services but Reba has been reluctant to leave her husband. However she turns up at Judy’s office one day stating that she has left her husband, has had to leave the children and has nowhere to go. Judy manages to locate crisis accommodation and negotiates with the husband for the children to be cared for by the mother. The husband rings one of the children one evening and tells his son that he is going to commit suicide. Reba rings Judy in a very distressed state.

c. A refugee family of mother and 4 teenage children has settled in Judy’s area and she has been working fairly closely with them and they are quite settled. However the mother, Aida, rings Judy to tell her that the two eldest children (16 and 18 years old) want to go to Adelaide to live with other relatives.

d. Joseph, a single father, has been told to take his son Sam to a hospital urgently as he needs an emergency operation. Joseph is at the hospital with Sam, but the other children aged 13, 10 and 8 are at school and will be returning home to an empty house. Joseph has been told that the doctors will not be able to operate until the following day and Joseph will need to stay in hospital with Sam overnight. Joseph is worried about the other children.

Case studies relating to health/disability:

e. Sonny is a 12 year old boy who has recently suffered from psychotic episodes. He is receiving treatment from the psychiatric unit of a local hospital, but has not been able to attend school since he became ill. His mother is worried about his return to school – both how to manage that and how it will impact on Sonny.

f. Judy hears through community sources that one of her clients. Anton is planning to have his 10 year old daughter circumcised. Judy would like to make her client aware that this practice is not tolerated in Australia.

g. An elderly couple are being cared for by their adult son. The father is disabled and needs a wheelchair. The son has a car accident, but damage to his leg means that he can no longer push the wheelchair. Occupational therapy services are arranging for an electric wheelchair, but this could take up to 12 months to arrive. How can Judy assist the family in the meantime?

Case studies relating to youth issues:

h. Fran is a 16 year old girl has been sponsored by her mother to come to Australia. At every contact with the mother Judy hears that the daughter is doing well but the daughter is never available to talk to Judy. Judy finally makes contact with the daughter and finds that her mother had asked her to leave the family home some months previously and she is now living with acquaintances. These people are charging approximately ¾ of the money that she receives from Centrelink just for rent. Judy is concerned about Fran’s health and welfare, but is not able to engage the government department responsible for child welfare as there is no evidence of a valid reason for Fran to leave her mother.

i. Peter, a 14 year old who is very shy, has been telling his parents that he is going to school every day but is in fact, missing a lot of his classes. When the family discovers this they contact Judy to ask for help. Peter has told his parents that he was afraid to talk to other children or participate in the classes.
j. Kim is 15 and lives with her mother and 4 other siblings. On hearing from her mother that she has been betrothed to an older man who lives in another state and that she will soon have to marry and move to that state, Kim runs away from home. Kim’s mother asks Judy for help.

**Case study relating to accommodation**

k. Judy is helping some clients to locate accommodation. She has heard that the family have refused all the properties offered to them up to now and she suspects that reasons for doing so may be related to the traumatic experiences that had occurred in their home in their country of origin.

**References**


**Participant Activities**

1. What are some of the things you need to consider when developing a settlement plan for entrants with the following visa subclasses?

   - Subclass 200
   - Subclass 201
   - Subclass 202
   - Subclass 203
   - Subclass 204
   - Subclass 866.
   - Subclasses 785 and 790
2. What are some of the most important things to consider when developing a settlement plan for:
   a) a single woman
   b) an unaccompanied minor
   c) a family with six children.

3. Imagine you are employed by Centrelink as a Migrant Liaison Officer. Explain the relevance of settlement plans for you.

4. Think carefully about your computer skills. Are there any areas in which you feel you need to improve? If so what are these?

5. Find a suitable course where you can learn the computer skills you need to undertake work in the settlement sector ... and enrol yourself.
Topic 10: Effective Advocacy

**TOPIC 10: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY**

**AIM:** to give participants an understanding of the role of advocacy in the community sector and the skills to:

- be an effective advocate for their clients;
- empower clients to be effective advocates; and
- support communities to advocate on their own behalf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is advocacy?</td>
<td>Presentation, case studies and activities</td>
<td>45 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaints mechanisms</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering clients to be effective advocates</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>35 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting communities to be effective advocates</td>
<td>Presentation and case study</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
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</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.

**What is Advocacy?**

‘Advocacy’ is the act of trying to persuade another person that a particular idea has merit or that something should happen or be done. An ‘advocate’ is the person who presents the case.

Being a worker in the settlement sector involves a great deal of direct and indirect advocacy:

- **direct advocacy** is where the worker is the person who makes representation – usually on behalf of a client;

- **indirect advocacy** is where the worker supports someone else to do the advocacy. The two most common forms of indirect advocacy involve the worker:
  - empowering their clients to be effective advocates for themselves;
  - drawing concerns to the attention of a senior worker in their organisation who will then engage in advocacy.
There are many things about which a settlement worker might feel the need to advocate including but by no means limited to situations where their client:

- needs a particular service from another agency;
- has not received a service to which they are entitled;
- needs something that cannot easily be obtained;
- is being adversely affected by the policy of their own or another agency.

### Strategies for Effective Advocacy

The first thing to remember about advocacy is that effective advocacy is rarely adversarial. Even when advocacy is undertaken in response to a major problem, going in with all guns blazing is unlikely to achieve the desired result. Adopting a more subtle and strategic approach can be far more effective. It is also important to remember that advocacy is not about winning or losing. Rather it should always be about securing the best possible outcome for the client(s).

How you go about this should vary depending on the situation and the strategies employed should match the circumstances. This being said, there are some underlying principles to guide common forms of settlement-related advocacy.

1. **Advocacy in relation to service access:**

The most common form of direct advocacy used by settlement workers involves them trying to secure services for their clients from other agencies or programs. The principles underpinning this form of advocacy are as follows:

- **WHAT:** You need to be clear about exactly what it is the client needs (and perhaps why they are not receiving it if there has been a blockage).
- **WHERE:** You need to know (or find out) where you can get these services/support and establish exactly what the agency offers.
- **HOW:** You need to know what you need to do to ensure your client has access to these services. This might involve making a call, filling in a form, taking the client to the service etc.
- **FOLLOW UP:** Never assume that because a referral has been made that everything has fallen into place. Always check with the client and/or other agency.

2. **Advocacy in relation to service difficulties:**

Another common form of advocacy is required when the client (or sometimes the worker themselves) experiences problems with another agency. In such cases, a slightly different strategy is required:

- **STEP 1: Identify the problem:** Sometimes this is easier said than done, especially if the person presenting with the problem is feeling upset or aggrieved. It is, however, important to spend some time getting to the bottom of the problems eg:
  - establishing what happened in the lead up to there being a problem;
  - finding out who said what to whom and when;
  - making sure you have all relevant documentation; etc.
STEP 2: Establish what should have happened: Sometimes people can be upset without good cause, eg when they have been denied access to a service to which they were not entitled or where it was outside the mandate of the agency to provide the service. It is entirely different, however, if something that should have happened did not. More often than not this involves someone being given inaccurate advice or being treated inappropriately. The key to addressing such problems is knowing what should have happened and to do this you need to find out about the relevant policy of the agency concerned. This might, for example, involve looking at service entitlements and/or their client service charter.

STEP 3: Raise your concerns: The next thing to do is to raise your concerns with someone with sufficient authority to address them. In most instances this is someone at the manager level. There are some important things to bear in mind when doing this:

- take the approach that the matter is something you would like their help to sort out rather than suggesting or implying that they or their agency have been at fault;
- present the facts as you know them. If you are relying on what you have been told, make sure this is made clear (e.g. ‘it is my understanding that …’ or ‘my client told me that …’);
- make reference to their policy;
- respectfully suggest a way in which the matter might be addressed (if one is obvious);
- make sure you record the result of the conversation in the file notes or in your diary.

STEP 4: Follow Up: If the resolution of the matter was that something would be done, it is a good idea to check that this in fact happened. If not, or if you were unable to reach a satisfactory conclusion in Step 3, it is wise to bring the matter to the attention of your supervisor. If this is not possible, it is best to write a letter addressed to the person to whom the person you have been dealing with reports. This letter should clearly, succinctly and non-judgementally set out everything that has occurred and request their intervention. If the matter is not resolved at this stage, you might wish to consider referring the matter to a relevant complaints body (see below).

3. Policy Advocacy

There are times when you might think that the position taken by your or another organisation is disadvantaging your client(s) and when you investigate the matter, you discover that the obstruction is not specific to your client but is linked to government policy, especially if embedded in legislation or regulations. When this is the case, it tends to be much harder to find a resolution – but not impossible – and it is rarely something a single worker can (or should try to) do by him/herself.

Generally speaking, when a worker identifies a systemic problem, the best thing to do is to bring the problem to person supervising them (be this another member of staff or the chairman of the management committee) who will then be responsible for what happens next. This being said, there are certain things a worker can do to help the process along. These include:

- be clear about what the problem involves;
- find out what policy/regulation/legislation is involved and exactly what it says;
- think carefully about why it says this. Is the problem linked to a broader policy objective or maybe it is an unintended consequence of an effort to do something else (see examples below);
➢ consider whether there are any other ways that the objectives of the agency concerned can be addressed without disadvantaging your clients;

➢ document your findings in relation to the above.

Presenting this information to a supervisor helps that person think about what to do next. Depending on what the issue is, there are certain things that person might consider doing. These include:

➢ raising the matter at an interagency meeting and seeking support from other agencies;

➢ raising the matter with a peak agency (for example the Settlement Council of Australia or the Refugee Council of Australia) and asking for their support to address the matter;

➢ writing to or asking to meet with the local Member of Parliament, the relevant Minister or head of the agency concerned;

➢ initiating a campaign.

When looking at systemic problems it is important to remember that it is often quite difficult to bring about change and, especially if it involves trying to change legislation, the process can be time consuming ... even if all players agree that change is needed.

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**Case Study 1**

This is an example of a successful attempt to change legislation.

Humanitarian entrants typically arrive in the country with little or no money and immediately face a whole variety of expenses, including those associated with setting up a home. It was felt that having access to a one-off payment soon after arrival would help a great deal.

Centrelink had provisions for making such payments – in the form of Crisis Payments – but one of the criteria for eligibility was that the crisis had to have occurred in Australia, thus automatically making humanitarian entrants ineligible.

A number of agencies worked together to change the legislation. Their advocacy involved many things including:

- working with policy staff within Centrelink to understand the rationale for the exclusion and discovering that it was not the result of a conscious attempt to exclude humanitarian entrants;
- developing a set of arguments why change was required, including looking at cost implications;
- seeking support for change from key politicians; and
- making submissions to a parliamentary committee.

As a result of this advocacy, humanitarian entrants now receive Crisis Payments soon after their arrival.
Case Study 2

This is an example of a less successful effort to change government policy.

Many Australians are concerned about the government’s policy of detaining unauthorised arrivals, including asylum seekers. Many arguments for changing the policy, including ones linked to human rights law, the psychological impact of detention and cost have been presented over time.

A number of positive changes (including the introduction of the policy not to detain children) have resulted but by and large, the detention policy remains unchanged.

The main reasons why, despite the concerted campaign, comparatively little headway has been made is that the government believes that they have sound policy reasons for maintaining their position (related to border security) and there is considerable public support for the maintenance of mandatory detention.

Suggested Activity

Divide the class into 5 groups and give each group one of the following scenarios. Ask them to consider how they, as workers, would go about seeking to find a resolution to the problem outlined and when they have had time to discuss this, ask them to report back to the class.

Scenario 1:

Your client returns from a visit to his bank distressed and angry. He says the person at the counter was rude and refused to give him any information.

Scenario 2:

You receive a call from the local doctor’s surgery complaining that they had gone to all the trouble of booking an interpreter for your clients but they had arrived for the appointment with a family member who was able to speak English. The doctor’s receptionist asks you to tell the clients not to waste their time again.

Scenario 3:

Your clients are a family in which two of the children have special needs. The school in a nearby suburb has an excellent reputation for working with such children and the family is keen to enrol their children there. The Principal says he is very happy to have the children but the Department of Education has said he cannot enrol them.

Scenario 4:

You have a client from Pakistan whose father with whom he lives is terminally ill. There is nothing his father wants more than to see his son who is still in Pakistan but the son was refused when he applied for a visitors’ visa to come to Australia.
Scenario 5:

At your local service providers’ interagency meeting, the workers share their concern that many of their clients have complex dental health issues which are having an impact on all other aspects of their lives but the waiting list for the free dental clinic is very long and they will have to wait a very long time before they can be seen.

Complaints Mechanisms

There are times when expert assistance is required to deal with a serious problem. Depending on the nature of the problem, it might be relevant to seek assistance from one of the agencies that have responsibility for investigating complaints. The main agencies that do this are listed below.

The Office of the Ombudsman

Advocates who want to make complaints about Government agencies can do so to the relevant Ombudsman. There is a Commonwealth Ombudsman that deals with complaints against Commonwealth departments and their services and there are also state Ombudsmen that perform a similar role in relation to state agencies.

The role of each Ombudsman’s Office is to undertake an impartial investigation of complaints from people who believe they have been treated unfairly or unreasonably by a government department or agency. If complaints are found to be valid, the Ombudsman’s Office will then assist in the resolution of disputes and seek to address defective administration.

Further information about the Commonwealth Ombudsman can be found at www.ombudsman.gov.au.

The Australian Human Rights Commission⁶²

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) was established in 1986 as an independent statutory organisation that works to protect and promote the human rights of all people in Australia.

Complaints may be made to the Human Rights Commission if it is perceived that there has been an abuse as defined by one or more of the following Acts:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Specific grounds for complaint include race, sex, pregnancy, marital status and disability in specific areas of public life such as employment, education and in the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs. The Commission also inquires into allegations of breaches of human rights by the Commonwealth government or its agencies.

More information about AHRC and how to make a complaint can be found at www.humanrights.gov.au.

⁶² The Australian Human Rights Commission was formerly the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).
State Government Complaints Bodies

In addition to the Ombudsman’s Offices, most state governments have also established bodies that are responsible for addressing concerns related to services for which they have responsibility such as health, housing and education. Information about these can be found on the relevant state government website.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is an independent statutory authority responsible for administering the Trade Practices Act 1974. ACCC’s goal is to enhance the welfare of Australians through the promotion of competition and fair-trading and provision of consumer protection. It is intended that the ACCC complement the state and territory consumer affairs agencies which administer consumer protection legislation in their jurisdictions.

For more information about the ACCC go to www.accc.gov.au.

Empowering Clients to be Effective Advocates

*Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.*

A worker who believes they must resolve every issue for their clients will be a very busy person ... and will have very dependent clients. They are also losing sight of the most important objective of settlement services – giving clients the skills to be able to operate independently in Australia. Key to this must therefore be helping clients understand how to be effective advocates.

Anyone who works with refugees and forced migrants will quickly tell you that, more often than not, they are exceptionally enterprising. This being said, they do have to learn to operate in an environment that can be very different to that to which they have been accustomed.

Refugees and other forced migrants bring with them a range of strategies that they have used in the past to try to get what they want. These tend to be a mixture of strategies that they used in their home country and others picked up while they were living in camps and settlements. Some translate well but, as discussed in Topic 4, others can be counterproductive in Australia.

It is not uncommon to find entrants who believe that in order to get what they want from a service provider they must:

- pay a bribe;
- be very forceful and demanding;
- hide the fact that they have any other form of support; etc.

In Australia we look unfavorably at such behaviour but for many entrants, this was the norm in their home country and/or what they had to do in order to survive their time in exile.

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63 Chinese proverb attributed to Lao Tzu.
It is not necessarily an easy task getting people to change their behaviour, especially when they have been doing things for many years and believe them to be effective. It takes time and patience. The following strategies can, however, help you to do this:

- explain how certain behaviours might be perceived e.g. ‘in Australia, if someone does ..., the other person will think/feel ...’;
- explain that some behaviours, especially offering bribes, can have highly detrimental consequences;
- avoid saying things that could be perceived as judgmental such as ‘it is wrong to ...’ or ‘you must not ...’;
- model constructive behaviour, for example role play with a client what they will say when they go to seek the support of another agency.

If you are on the receiving end of behavior you consider inappropriate, there are also some strategies you can use to help you deal with the situation:

- try not to be judgmental – the client might not be aware of how inappropriate their behavior is;
- try not to lose your temper or respond in kind;
- try not to lose sight of the fact that the client might have a genuine entitlement to your service;
- try to explain what you can and cannot do for the client;
- if you feel you are not making headway, call in a senior person. Many entrants respect authority;
- if you know (or can find out) whether the person has a caseworker, try to contact this person to see if you can get further insight into how you can help the client.

**Suggested Activity**

Select a couple of the more confident/outgoing members of the class and try to catch them before the class begins. Ask them to role play a scenario in which one is a counter officer (e.g. at Centrelink) and the other is a ‘difficult’ client who wants to get more help than s/he is currently receiving.

Allow this to play out for a little while then stop the role play and ask the class to suggest other ways the worker might have handled the situation. Suggest to the ‘actors’ that they might try some of these out. Discuss the results.
Supporting Communities to be Effective Advocates

Just as empowerment of an individual entrant is a fundamental part of the settlement process, so too is empowerment of refugee communities. An important part of becoming contributory members of the Australian community is for communities to learn how to be effective advocates for the things that are important to them. Much of the advice given about advocacy in the various sections above is equally relevant for communities but there are some additional dimensions that have to be considered because in a community organisation there is a possibility or even probability that there will be:

- lots of different people who will not necessarily share the same priorities;
- people who are more vocal and will try to influence the agenda;
- influential people who do not have a good grasp of how to operate strategically in the new environment.

The challenge for workers is to give community members the skill and confidence to opt for a community engagement model in which:

- community members are consulted about their needs;
- these needs are prioritised in a transparent and strategic manner;
- there is consultation with other key players;
- research is undertaken to ensure that the issues are fully understood;
- an advocacy strategy is developed and roles assigned;
- alliances are formed and mentors sought;
- the advocacy strategy plan is implemented;
- there is a process of reflective evaluation that enables modification of strategy when required;
- the community members are informed about what action has been taken and what results have been achieved.

As previously mentioned, the Migrant Development Association (MDA) in Brisbane has produced a kit for community leaders called ‘How to Run a Community Organisation’. This contains practical first-principle advice about how to go about identifying the needs of a community and what to do once this has been done.64

Also important is helping entrant communities to understand that:

- their concerns are relevant;
- they have a right to express their concerns;
- there are people who will be interested in hearing about them.

Many refugees and other forced migrants came from situations where they had no voice or where the expression of opinions could be very dangerous. It is also possible that they came from countries where it is improbable that they would ever have had any dealings with politicians and/or senior bureaucrats – such people being seen as hugely important and totally inaccessible. This is not the case in Australia.

Local, state and federal politicians are usually keen to talk to people from their local community and to listen to their concerns. Similarly, government departments run consultations and invite community members to come along to raise issues of concern. Then there are the peak bodies such as the Settlement Council of Australia and the Refugee Council of Australia that need to listen to the views of community members in

64 Go to www.mdainc.org.au for contact details.
order to perform their roles efficiently. Workers need to explain how entrants can go about making good use of the opportunities that exist.

Another issue worth mentioning when it comes to community advocacy is the use of demonstrations and protests. One of the things most prized in democratic countries is the right of free speech but sometimes being too free with one’s speech can have negative consequences.

Many emerging community organisations believe that the best way to get what they want is to hold a demonstration – and they have every right to do this so long as it is done in accordance with the law and peacefully – but holding a protest does not always achieve the desired results as the case study below demonstrates.

**Case Study**

During the Easter holiday in 2002, about 1,000 people staged a protest outside the Woomera Immigration Detention Centre to protest about the detention of asylum seekers. Without a mandate from the larger group, a small group of protesters used the melee to breech the walls of the Centre and assist about 40 detainees to escape.

Both local and international press gave major coverage to the protest, focusing in particular on the scenes of angry confrontation and the detainees’ escape.

While many of those involved still argue the protest was a great success, it has to be acknowledged that:

- many people in the Australian community looked at the scenes of violence and made a mental link between refugees and violence, reaching the conclusion that ‘we don’t want people like that in our country’;
- efforts to bring about a change in policy were set back because governments will not be seen to respond to the use of violent protest;
- the well-meaning protesters jeopardised the asylum claims of those they encouraged to escape because, by escaping custody, these people had committed a criminal offence in Australia and risked being denied protection on character grounds.

Community leaders need to be made aware that deciding to hold a demonstration brings with it risks and there could be unintended consequences. They also need to be advised that if they choose to stage a peaceful protest, the police MUST be informed in advance and their plans cleared.

Another strategy that many mistakenly believe is a sure fire way to raise issues is use of the media. Like demonstrations and protests, this can be a double-edged sword. Many media outlets look for sensation and will try to distort things to suit their own agendas. A story about a particular community not having access to something they want could very easily be twisted into a story about ‘foreigners coming to this country and demanding things that local battlers don’t have’.

Those working with community leaders should help them understand the pitfalls of certain types of action and refer them to agencies experienced in advocacy, such as the Settlement Council of Australia and the Refugee Council of Australia that can provide advice on the most effective ways to bring their concerns to the attention of those with the capacity to address them.
References

Complaints Bodies:


Peak Agencies:


Other Resources:


Participant Activities

1. Think of a time when you had to deal with a problem with an organisation (a bank, your phone provider, a utility company …) and it did not go well. What went wrong?

2. With hindsight, how could you have handled it better?

3. Is there government policy you do not agree with? Try to find out more about it:
   - Is it linked to legislation or regulations?
   - What is the government’s rationale for this policy?
   - What are your main objections to this policy?
   - How would you advocate to change the policy?

4. Can you think of an example where people held a demonstration and the message conveyed to the public through the press was very different to that which the demonstrators wished to convey?
Topic 11: Effective Work Practices

**TOPIC 11: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY**

**AIM:** to ensure participants:

- know when and how to engage interpreters and make efficient use of them in their interactions with clients;
- understand the importance of NOT giving migration advice;
- understand the importance of reporting within the settlement sector and the responsibilities of workers in relation to reporting;
- recognise the importance of meeting workplace deadlines;
- have an appreciation of how to operate in a multicultural workplace;
- recognise the importance of individual responsibility in relation to workplace safety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working with interpreters</td>
<td>Explanation plus activity</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration Advice</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting reporting requirements</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting deadlines</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with colleagues from diverse backgrounds</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe work practices</td>
<td>Explanation plus activity</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
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</tbody>
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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**

As the name suggests, this topic is about work practices. While on the surface they might seem quite diverse, each of the subjects covered in this section represents an essential work practice within the settlement sector and for each there are particular skills and attitudes that workers are required to apply.
Working with Interpreters

Unless someone is employed to work only with entrants who speak their first language (which does happen), workers in the settlement sector will be required to use interpreters at some stage ... and sometimes they will find themselves interacting through interpreters in almost all of their interactions with clients. Even those who begin their career in the settlement sector working with their own language group will need to understand when and when it is not appropriate to use their own language skills. Further, these workers often 'graduate' to more mainstream settlement work which brings them into contact with clients from many different backgrounds. Understanding when and how to use interpreters is therefore essential knowledge for all workers in the settlement sector.

Role of Interpreters

If you were to ask someone what an interpreter does, most people would think the answer would be self-evident – ‘translate from one language to another’ – and in essence this is correct. Not surprisingly, however, there is a little more to it than this.

The first thing to be clear about is the distinction between interpreters and translators. It is customary in Australia that the terms are distinguished as follows:

- The primary role of an interpreter is to transfer messages verbally from one language to another.
- The primary role of a translator is to transfer written material from one language to another.

Interpreters (and translators to a lesser but no less important extent) play a vital role in Australia because of the existence of Access and Equity Policy (as discussed in Topic 3). This gives all residents, irrespective of ethnic background and first language preference, the right to access the services freely available to English speaking Australians.

As will be discussed below, interpreters can be present in the room or, more commonly, at the end of a telephone.

There are a number of important things to bear in mind about the role of interpreters:

- their sole purpose is to provide an accurate interpretation of what was said by the parties to the conversation;
- they should not:
  - add or subtract to that which was said,
  - insert their own opinions,
  - seek to explain anything;
- they are not an advocate for or counsellor to the client;
- they are bound by a strict code of professional ethics not to disclose anything that was said during the session.

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65 The information in this section complements that contained in the unit: CHCCS405A: Work effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers.
66 It is acknowledged that this section has drawn heavily upon information from the DIBP website (www.border.gov.au) and upon A Guide to Working with Interpreters and Translators, a publication of the NT Interpreting and Translating Service, found at www.itsnt.nt.gov.au/publications.
When Should Interpreters Be Used?

There is a common trap that some service providers fall into. They think that interpreters are only required when their clients speak no English and if they speak a little, they can muddle through with simple words, lots of gestures and the occasional scribbled drawing. Not only is this position wrong, it can also be very dangerous ... for the client and the service provider.

In addition to their use for clients with little or no English, interpreters should be routinely engaged:

- for clients who have basic English;
- for clients who indicate that they are more comfortable in their own language;
- in instances where there is important or complex information to convey;
- where the client is under stress or is likely to be placed under stress by the conversation.

Selecting an Interpreter

As tempting as it might be to ask a friend or relative to interpret or to grab a member of staff who speaks the same language, this should be avoided for anything other than the most simple, practical conversations (e.g. arranging a meeting time). For all substantive interactions, the services of a professional, accredited interpreter should be engaged.

Such interpreters:

- have undergone specialised training;
- have been determined to be competent in the language they are interpreting in English;
- are bound by the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) Code of Ethics which, as mentioned above, includes confidentiality provisions;
- have been cleared by Australian Federal Police checks;
- are covered by professional indemnity, public liability and workers compensation insurance.

There are many sound reasons why relatives and friends (especially children) should not be used to interpret, including but not limited to:

- lack of the technical skills required to provide an accurate interpretation, especially of specialised (e.g. medical) terminology;
- client reservations about disclosing sensitive information in front of someone known to them;
- the risk that there might be breaches of confidentiality;
- lack of impartiality;
- damage to the family hierarchy;
- potential filtering of or editorialising upon what the client is saying;
- the possibility that information obtained might be used for private advantage or gain;
- possible legal consequences of inaccurate translation.

It is also unwise to use a relative or friend who is an accredited interpreter to interpret. While they might have the skills and are bound by confidentiality etc, they are not impartial.

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67 Accreditation is through the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI).
**Bicultural workers** should also not be asked by other service providers to act as interpreters, no matter how tempting it might be to do so. Bicultural workers have a particular role to play ... most significantly in this context 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.

Further, when requesting an interpreter it is vital that careful thought be given to any relevant characteristics of the entrant that should be considered, such as:

- gender,
- ethnicity,
- trauma profile.

Within most refugee communities there are individuals who will be fearful of or traumatised by others. For example, it is not appropriate to book:

- a male interpreter for a Woman at Risk (visa subclass 204) entrant,
- a Burmese interpreter for a Karen entrant,
- a Lebanese Arabic speaker for a Sudanese entrant; etc.

Workers need to be aware of these sensitivities and ensure that requests for interpreters specify requirements. 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 entrant’s settlement outcomes.

**Interpreter Cards**

Settlement services providers typically provide special wallet-sized cards to their clients (*I Need an Interpreter* cards) that:

- identify their need for an interpreter;
- specify the language they speak;
- give the phone number to contact the national Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) or its state-based equivalent.

It is intended that entrants with little or no English can present these cards when seeking to engage with services and that the service providers will then take the initiative to contact the interpreting service.

Interpreter cards can be obtained free of charge from the Department of Immigration.

**Translating and Interpreting Service**

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National), which remained under the Immigration portfolio, is one of a number of user-pays interpreting services provider for people who do not speak English and for the English speakers who need to communicate with them. TIS National has access to over 2,400 contracted interpreters across Australia, speaking more than 160 languages and dialects. Its service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for any person or organisation in Australia requiring interpreting services on a user-pays basis.
TIS National assigns interpreting tasks to contracted interpreters based on their accreditation standard, geographical location and availability. Priority is given to interpreters with National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) professional accreditation or recognition when allocating assignments. Requests can be made for male and female interpreters in sensitive or gender-specific interpreting assignments.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) funds a Free Interpreting Service (delivered through TIS National) for non-English speaking permanent residents and Australian citizens communicating with various approved groups and individuals such as:

- non-profit, non-government, community-based organisations for case work and emergency services where the organisation does not receive funding to provide these services.\(^{68}\)

- private medical practitioners providing Medicare-rebateable services and their reception staff to arrange appointments and provide results of medical tests.\(^{69}\)

Before progressing it is relevant to note that there are times when it is not possible to find a suitable accredited interpreter in the client’s first language. This is especially the case where the client is from a small and emerging community in which no one has yet become a NAATI accredited or recognised interpreter. In such cases it is sometimes possible to use an interpreter in the entrant’s second language (e.g. many African entrants speak French, Arabic or Swahili as a second language) or other people with the required language skills, such as bilingual workers or volunteers. Where matters relate to legal, medical, torture and trauma or other mental health issues, a professional interpreter with NAATI accreditation should be used. Alternative arrangements should only be made where all options for professional interpreting services (including telephone interpreting) have been exhausted.

DSS also funds a free translation service for people settling permanently in Australia. The service is provided to enable permanent residents and Australian citizens to participate in the community by having personal documents translated free of charge into English during their initial two-year settlement period. Some temporary and provisional visa holders may also be eligible for the service. Applications for this can be lodged at any Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) office.


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\(^{68}\) Organisations can apply for a fee exemption for calls through TIS National.

\(^{69}\) It should be noted that in addition to TIS, states and territories have their own general and specialised (e.g. medical) interpreting services.
Booking an Interpreter

Requests for interpreters should be made in advance where possible to ensure that an appropriate interpreter is available.

When booking an interpreter, it is important that you provide the following information:

- language and/or dialect required,
- name of your client,
- gender of your client,
- date, time and anticipated duration of the job,
- type of assignment (e.g. casework session, group information session, court hearing, medical appointment etc),
- whether there are any particular sensitivities (gender, ethnicity, religion etc) that you wish taken into consideration in the selection of an interpreter,
- your name, agency and contact number.

If you are seeking to book an on-site interpreter, you should also provide details of:

- the name of the person the interpreter should report to upon arrival,
- the time you expect the interpreter to arrive,
- the correct address for the assignment, including specific instructions if the address, or location, is difficult to find.

Working With an On-site Interpreter

By far the preferred way of using an interpreter is to have the interpreter present in the room with you. This is referred to as ‘on-site’ or ‘face to face’ interpreting.

As a general rule when working with an on-site interpreter you should:

- be clear in your mind that you are in charge of the interview, not the interpreter;
- ensure that you have a quiet place free from interruptions to conduct the interview
- arrange seating in a triangle if possible. This will help your client to feel comfortable and not intimidated and will facilitate communication;
- avoid leaving the interpreter alone with the client as this can place the interpreter in a compromising and awkward situation.

Begin the interview by:

- introducing yourself and the interpreter to your client;
- explaining the purpose of the interview;
- explaining the role of the interpreter to your client.

During the interview you should:

- speak directly to your client and look at your client, not the interpreter;
- discourage the interpreter from chatting to yourself or the client;
- speak clearly and not too fast;
- use plain English, avoid jargon or slang;
- give only two or three ideas at a time;
- do not rush. Make sure you allow adequate time for interpreting;

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70 There are some languages – Arabic being a classic example – where there are many different versions and a speaker of one will not necessarily be an appropriate interpreter for another.
be vigilant for any signs that the client (or the interpreter) are not communicating well or are uncomfortable in each other's presence;
be prepared to terminate the interview if you feel that it is not working for the client or if there are messages which you feel are not being conveyed correctly.

After the interview:

• ask your client if everything was clearly understood;
• find out if there are any questions or concerns.

If the session has covered traumatic issues, it is good practice to spend a few moments with the interpreter to check that s/he is OK and/or to answer any questions s/he might have. Don’t forget – interpreting can be very traumatic for an interpreter, especially if the session mirrors some past experiences.

Working With a Telephone Interpreter

It is often not possible to secure the services of an on-site interpreter, especially in less common languages, or if you want to ensure the client and interpreter are not known to each other, or if you are from a regional centre. In such cases, telephone interpreters are used. You can use a telephone interpreter in one of two ways:

• where you and the client are in the same room and the interpreter is on speaker or conference phone;
• where all parties are on the phone. This is the least preferred method for anything other than simple communication (e.g. organising an appointment) as it is very difficult to establish any form of rapport with the client and you are unable to benefit from picking up non-verbal cues.

Once connected you will need to provide your agency’s name, client code and location. You will also need to provide your name and telephone number. Depending on how long the wait will be to connect to an interpreter, you may be asked to wait on line or they may call you back.

When your session with your client commences:

• take charge of the interview;
• introduce yourself and the interpreter to the client;
• let the interpreter know what type of equipment you are using, i.e. speaker phone, a conference call facility or whether you and the client are on separate phones;
• give a short explanation of what you are going to discuss and explain the role of the interpreter;
• speak directly to the client, using the first person;
• conduct the interview using clear language;
• use short simple sentences;
• be vigilant for signs that the interpretation is not working and terminate the interview if necessary;
• at the end let the interpreter and the client know that they are finished. Don’t forget to thank the interpreter for their assistance.

Telephone interpreting is best suited for discussions over the telephone that will take less than 15 minutes. Interviews that are complex or will take longer than 15 minutes should ideally be conducted with an on-site interpreter (though in rural or regional areas, this might not be possible).
Suggested Activity

If you have time, it is a good idea to ‘model’ the use of an interpreter in an on-site session and where the interpreter is on the phone. Your ability to do this is greatly enhanced if you have two participants who speak the same language other than English who can role-play the parts of client and interpreter. Even if you do not have this advantage, it is useful to show seating arrangements and interaction styles so that participants have experienced a practical example rather than just discussed the theory.

Migration Advice

As was discussed in Topics 4 and 6, separation from family and friends is a heavy burden for most forced migrants and they have a strong desire to be reunited with them as soon as possible. It is thus understandable that they will turn to the people they know in Australia and see as sources of information and advice in the hope that they might be able to assist them with this. The significant issue here is that, unlike other areas in which a worker might give advice, the law in Australia is very strict about who can – and cannot – give migration advice.

In Australia you have to be a registered migration agent to give advice about a migration matter. Registered migration agents are required to:

- have a sound knowledge of migration law and practice;
- act professionally and in a timely manner;
- abide by the migration agent’s Code of Conduct;
- have appropriate insurance;
- pass character tests (including criminal history checks).

This law has been introduced to protect people because those without the specialist knowledge required to give migration advice might:

- be unaware of current legislation and procedures;
- provide incorrect advice;
- mislead people about their chances of success.

Sometimes it can be hard to tell whether what you are saying to a client constitutes ‘advice’. It is not advice if you help someone to fill in a form but if that person asks you about how they should answer any of the questions, this is advice. The best way to deal with cases where your clients ask you for help with migration matters is to explain that you are not allowed to help them and that if you do, you can get into serious trouble. After all, it is against the law for an unregistered person to give migration advice and penalties of up to 10 years jail can apply.

Migration agents operating in Australia must be registered with the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA). To find a registered migration agent, search the Register of Migration Agents on the Office of the MARA website at www.mara.gov.au.

For further information about migration advice, go to the Department of Immigration’s website: www.border.gov.au.
Meeting Reporting Requirements

Most workers at some stage complain about ‘paperwork’ and say that they would much rather ‘be doing their job’. Those in the settlement sector are no exception. The key thing to remember, however, is that no matter how tedious it might seem at the time, ‘paperwork’ is an integral part of work in this sector … for a number of very good reasons.

When we talk about ‘paperwork’ these days, the reality is that more often than not we actually mean filling in forms, spreadsheets and data bases on the computer rather than dealing with pieces of paper as such, though this varies from office to office. Irrespective of the medium, most of this work is linked directly or indirectly to reporting, which in turn is linked to accountability which is crucial when you are supporting vulnerable clients … and in most instances using government funds to do so.

The reporting obligations of agencies will vary considerably depending on the nature of the work undertaken and the body to whom they are accountable. Most community-based agencies delivering settlement services receive funding from the Department of Social Services (DSS) and many also receive funding from other sources including:

- other Federal government departments;
- state government departments;
- local government;
- philanthropic bodies (trusts and foundations);
- members of the general public.

Each one of these funders, except the last, require that reports be submitted, documenting the activities undertaken and the expenditure of funds.

In addition, community-based agencies are also required to report on an annual basis to the body with whom they are registered or under whose umbrella they come. Auspiced bodies have to report to the auspicing agency, incorporated associations are required to report to the relevant state department and companies are obliged to report to the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC).

While it is tempting to think that reporting is the sole domain of managers and other senior staff, the reality is that every single person with the agency has an important part to play. If case notes are not completed, instances of service not recorded, time sheets not submitted … those who have direct responsibility for reporting will not be able to prepare the reports that are required in order to keep the agency open.

Working for a government agency does not take you off the reporting bandwagon … it just imposes different kinds of reporting obligations. Each layer of bureaucracy has reporting obligations to the next layer up until you get to the point at which the agency is required to report to the relevant Minister and to parliament. At the Federal level this through a process called ‘Senate Estimates’ and similar processes exist at the state and local levels.

The key messages to communicate about reporting are:

- every staff member is a part of a reporting chain;
- each link of that chain has to be strong if the chain is to be strong;
- if the chain breaks because of a weak link, vulnerable clients could suffer and the agency could lose funding (and workers their positions).

Each agency will have its own reporting requirements. There is an expectation that staff members will take personal responsibility for:
• learning about the systems and procedures within their agency;
• acquiring any additional skills (in particular IT skills) they need to use these systems;
• learning about and employing the terminology the agency wishes staff to use when recording information and reporting;
• seeking assistance if they are unclear about any aspect of their work;
• ensuring case notes, reports and other documentation is completed in a timely fashion;
• ensuring that all information recorded is accurate and comprehensive.

If you have participants in your class for whom English is a second language, it is important to stress the point about terminology ... though it cannot necessarily be assumed that native English speakers will be fully conversant with settlement terminology. There are particular words that are typically used in case notes and reports. It is important that they ask their supervisor for a list of these words, make sure they are very clear what they mean and then practice using them, checking that their usage is correct. The following are examples of commonly used terminology:

• case conference
• principal applicant
• health manifest
• check-in etc.

There is also a myriad of abbreviations and acronyms that workers are expected to be familiar with: DIBP, DSS, AUSCO (Australian Cultural Orientation program), STA (Short term Accommodation), HGA (Household Goods Assistance) etc. It’s not a bad idea to devote a page in our diary when you first start a new job and write down abbreviations and acronyms when you hear them – and if you don’t know what they stand for, ask – and record the long name too. You’ve then got it on hand to refer to (discretely) when needed.

**Meeting Deadlines**

The aim of settlement services is to provide services in a timely manner that facilitate and promote autonomy as quickly and effectively as possible. It is not an open ended contract. As with reporting requirements, every organisation will usually have established timeframes and procedures about what services will be delivered, and funding will be based around these specific outcomes. There may be a checklist, or case management plan mapping the various outcomes and milestones you aim to achieve with each client.

Deadlines are particularly important for providing initial settlement services. The Humanitarian Settlement Services contract has inbuilt time frames for the delivery of particular services. Some things need to be delivered immediately, such as if a refugee arrives with a health alert. This requires that the entrant be seen by a doctor within a specified period. If this does not occur, it is considered a breach of the contract. Similarly there are built in timeframes for registration with Centrelink and Medicare and opening bank accounts and for the provision of other services such as accommodation.

Just as in the context of reporting discussed above, each worker must take responsibility for meeting the timeframes that govern their work. Failure to do so has negative ramifications for the client, their colleagues and their agency.
Working With Colleagues from Diverse Backgrounds

Working with people from different backgrounds can be like travelling the world every day, with different languages, different foods at lunch time, different customs, values, religions. It is the world at your doorstep and it can be both enriching and enlightening. But to build effective relationships and appreciate and acknowledge the best of these differences, you need to show your colleagues that you are genuinely interested in them and their culture. Identify and be aware of guidelines for showing good manners in your colleagues’ different cultures. Listen, learn and observe without making premature judgements. This interest will breed a respectful two-way communication that will be both personally and professionally rewarding. Try to be inclusive of everyone. What you learn from your colleagues, and they from exchanges with you, can be used to engage more effectively with your refugee clients.

Following are some general principles that should underpin a multicultural workplace:

- Openness, tolerance and flexibility are critical.
- Wherever possible, work practices should be negotiated to find a model with which all team members can be comfortable.
- Talking directly about differences helps build trust, facilitates decision-making and opens the way, where appropriate, to compromise and ultimately build a better way of working together.

In saying this, it is important to recognise that there are key cultural differences surrounding expectations of the workforce. Whereas compromise agreements may seem acceptable to Australian born workers, in the more hierarchical structure of some Asian and African cultures there is an expectation that senior managers will make decisions and take the lead. A manager going to workers to seek their advice or input can make some workers feel nervous and lead to a mistaken belief that the manager cannot do his/her job. It is thus very important:

- for managers to ‘contextualise’ consultation in the workplace, taking time to explain why it is being done and what is expected of the workers;
- for Australian-born workers not assume that the way they do things is necessarily the ‘right’ way or that the way they view things is the ‘only’ way they will be perceived;
- for workers from other backgrounds to be careful not to make assumptions. If things seem strange or out of place – ask someone. Do not automatically take offence or assume the worst of others.

Another key lesson to learn in the multicultural workplace is that related to saving face. Australians are known for teasing (‘knocking’) each other and for using irony and deprecating language in workplace conversations. There is also the famous ‘tall poppy syndrome’ which sees individual achievements played down. Those not familiar with such interactions can easily interpret well-intentioned comments as direct or indirect criticism and this will cause them considerable pain as they believe that they have failed or been shamed in front of their colleagues.

Non-verbal communication differences may also cause friction. You need to understand and respect important socio-religious differences and be prepared to consider (or even reconsider) how these affect workplace relationships. For example some things that may cause offence include:
- a woman putting out her hand for a man to shake,
- having direct eye contact,
- pointing at someone,
- using a single finger to beckon someone to come to you,
- revealing attire,
- being too close during conversations,
- touching someone’s head (the most holy body part in some cultures),
- pointing the feet at someone (the least holy body part in some cultures).

Cultural differences should be addressed and viewed as what they are: potentially different values, assumptions, expectations and behaviour as a result of differing collective experiences. It should be understood that members of a team are not there to represent a culture or particular ethnic group: they represent themselves. However, their cultural background will influence behaviour. An understanding of cultural differences encourages the tolerance and flexibility required for the team to work well together. Further, understanding and being able to adapt to the other culture - whether international or interdepartmental - will make your work more enjoyable and less frustrating.

**NOTE:** there is further examination of the issue of culture (in the context of working with clients from different cultures) in Topic 12.

### Safe Work Practices

Employers have an obligation to protect workers from risks in the tasks that they carry out and/or the equipment used to carry out that task. Safe work procedures also ensure that workers are aware of the risks in their work tasks, and outline how to avoid injury or illness while doing these tasks. Safe work procedures document the risks associated with a work task and incorporating the appropriate risk control measures into a sequence of steps for doing the task safely. Every organisation is required by law to a Work Health and Safety Policy and to ensure their employees are familiar with this.

When working with refugees and other forced migrants, caseworkers and other service providers will often be in situations where they are alone with the client and are therefore more vulnerable. If clients are traumatised or frustrated, anger may be directed towards caseworker. Service providers need to be aware of potential risk and follow safe working practices to minimise the risk.

When visiting a client’s home, you should be sure to follow agency guidelines. These are likely to include the following precautions:

- Make sure that your mobile phone is working and has coverage.
- If you feel uneasy about the client, do not visit alone. If you are a female, ask a male colleague to accompany you.
- If your client is aggressive, avoid arguing, ensure that you are out of reach of the client and depart as quickly and unprovocatively as possible.
- If you observe any suspicious behaviour, or are unsure of what to do, report this to your case manager without delay.
- Record any incidents on an Incident Report Form.
- In case of an emergency call 000.
- Carry a first aid kit with you, but in an emergency only respond with first aid if you are fully trained or are acting under the instructions of the 000 operator.
- If using a car ensure it has comprehensive insurance.
- Secure children in suitable child restraints and never allow a child under 8 to sit in the front seat of the car.
Suggested Activity

Brainstorm with participants what some of the risks of settlement work might be, especially when working with clients:

- who are traumatised;
- who have little understanding of Australian laws and customs;
- in their own home;
- in an office setting.

Ask for suggestions for how to manage these situations safely.

References


Participant Activities

1. If it is possible through your workplace or through other contacts, set up an opportunity to have a face to face conversation with someone through an interpreter. Better still if you can have a trained worker observing you during this time as there are often things we do subconsciously that are not helpful to the communication.

2. Imagine you are a caseworker trying to set up a doctor’s appointment for your client. The doctor’s receptionist is very reluctant to book an interpreter, saying it is too expensive and too complicated, and besides which, your client always comes with her son and his English isn’t too bad. What arguments are you going to use to try to convince her to change her mind?

3. Your client is a Rohingya woman from Myanmar who arrived on a 204 visa. What issues are you going to take into consideration when booking an interpreter?

4. As explained, deadlines are very important. Try to think of three things you can commit to doing to help you meet workplace deadlines:

5. You are a female Home Tutor, providing an English lesson to a refugee woman in her home. Her two small children are asleep in a bedroom. While you are there, her husband returns unexpectedly. He is clearly intoxicated and angry that you are there. He picks up a knife and starts to threaten you and your client. What should you do?

6. Think through your answer to the above. Have you forgotten anyone? Is there something else you should do?
### Topic 12: Self-Awareness and Support

#### TOPIC 12: SESSION OVERVIEW AND SUGGESTED PRESENTATION STRATEGY

**AIM:** to provide an opportunity for participants to reflect upon their interactions with clients and self-care within the workplace and to acquaint them with skills and strategies for dealing with these issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Suggested Presentation Strategy</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors influencing interactions with clients</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing perceptions</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and managing boundaries</td>
<td>Presentation and activity</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarious traumatisation</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-care strategies</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding exercise</td>
<td>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.

### Factors Influencing Interactions with Clients

In Topic 5 we touched upon the entrants’ culture but when working in a cross-cultural environment, it is equally important to be aware of how each worker’s own culture will affect the work they do.

‘Culture’ is a strange thing in the Australian context. Some countries have a very strong sense of a national cultural identity but not so Australia. Amongst those born in Australia, there are various identifiable subcultures in which people identify with their ancestry (eg Aboriginal, Greek, Scottish etc) or interests (eg the ‘beach culture’) but many Australian born people would be inclined to think that culture is ‘something that foreigners have’ and the way they think and act is ‘normal’ rather than being culturally defined.
One of the main consequences of ignorance of how culture has shaped your own sense of who you are and how things work in the world is that it is easy to be judgemental of others. It is easy to think that the way we do things is the ‘right way’ and it therefore follows that other ways are ‘the wrong way’ rather than just being different.

**Case Study**

A young Australian woman spent a year working as a waitress in a restaurant in New York. When she was leaving she went to say goodbye to the manager and she was somewhat taken aback when he said to her ‘I am glad you are leaving because I think you are the rudest person I have encountered’. She had the presence of mind to ask why he thought this and he replied that she never said ‘thank you’. After some deep reflection, she realised that what she had been saying was ‘ta’ and that despite the common language and seemingly similar culture, there were enough differences in cultures for her to have unwittingly make an error that had completely clouded others perceptions of her.

An important part of working cross-culturally is having an understanding of who you are and how this will influence the way others perceive you. The sorts of things that are relevant include but are definitely not limited to your:

- gender,
- age,
- ethnicity,
- class,
- religion,
- level of education,
- confidence in dealing with new people,
- preferred mode of dress,
- adornment (eg tattoos and body piercing),
- attitudes to people from particular backgrounds/religions etc.

**Suggested Activity**

Remind the participants about the previous discussion about making assumptions about clients based on first impressions.

Make the point that clients do this too. When they first meet a worker, they make assumptions about him or her.

Ask the participants to write down a list of things they THINK a participant might notice about them when they first meet. This might be their age, gender, dress etc.

Then divide the class into pairs and hand each person a pre-prepared slip of paper on which one of the following profiles is shown:

- Illiterate woman with 5 children from Ethiopia.
- Single male from Iraq, 55 years old, with PhD in physics.
Former farmer with wife and 3 children from Myanmar.

16 year old male unaccompanied minor from Sudan.

Middle aged man who has been running food distribution in his refugee camp in Tanzania for UNHCR.

Widow of high level political figure from Sierra Leone.

Hazara Woman at Risk entrant from Afghanistan.

It is OK if more than one participant receives the same profile ... and when you are handing them out, think creatively about to whom you hand them.

Each person will take turns in being the client (i.e. the person on their piece of paper) and the caseworker.

Explain that in the first instance, the ‘client’ should reflect on their first impressions of their ‘caseworker’. This requires this person to put themselves into the shoes of the newly arrived refugee and view the ‘caseworker’ (i.e. the person they are paired with) from this perspective. For example: if you were the single male from Iraq, 55 years old, with PhD in physics, what would be going through your mind when you discovered that your new caseworker was a very young woman or a person from Africa or ... 

After an appropriate period of time, get the pairs to reverse roles so that the person who was the caseworker takes on the persona of the person on their sheet of paper and reflects on their first impressions of the ‘caseworker’.

Ask the pairs to discuss the extent to which the things they wrote about themselves matched the things that were relevant for the ‘client’.

Open up this discussion for the class as a whole, drawing out the importance of workers being able to anticipate how a particular client might view them and noting that every client will view them differently. As will be discussed below, knowing this helps workers to engage effectively with their clients.

**Managing Perceptions**

Some things can be easily changed in order to make clients feel more comfortable ... the way one dresses is an example ... but other things ... such as age, gender and religion ... cannot be changed. It is therefore important that workers are aware that their clients will perceive them in a particular way that is shaped by their own culture and experiences and that it is their role to manage the situation in the best interests of the client. There are two main ways they might consider doing this:

**Naming the issue:** it is often possible to deflate any possible concerns a client might have by addressing the issue with the client. For example the worker might say ‘I understand that in your country, the people providing advice to you would probably be men. In Australia things are different. Many of the people helping refugees are women, just as there are women in all sections of the workforce. It is important that you understand that I have been trained to provide this service. If, however, you are uncomfortable with me being your caseworker, it is important that you tell me ....’ Similar forms of wording could be used for religion, ethnicity etc.
Changing the caseworker: if a newly arrived entrant has come from a situation where they have been persecuted on the basis of their ethnicity or religion, it is inappropriate for either the worker or the interpreter to be a member of the group associated with the persecution. Similarly, the gender of the worker and the entrant must also be considered. While it might be possible to relax this consideration over time ... and in consultation with the entrant ... it is important to remember that in the first instance, the most important thing is to make newly arrived entrants feel safe ... and confronting them with memories of their persecution will not assist this. It is thus important for workers to be ever mindful of this issue and if inappropriately assigned, go to their supervisor and suggest reassignment.

Understanding and Managing Boundaries

Most of the people who work with refugees and forced migrants have chosen to do this because they want to help people and/or make a contribution ... which is as it should be ... but it is essential that this be kept in perspective.

One of the challenges that faces every worker is finding the balance between connecting sufficiently with the clients in order for a constructive bond to be formed and becoming too involved and losing all sense of objectivity. The following diagram from Foundation House\(^\text{71}\) provides a useful tool to introduce this challenge:

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Every worker has to be aware that there are boundaries that should not be crossed and these are there to protect both the worker and the client. Such boundaries exist in all areas but they are particularly important in this field because of the vulnerability of the clients and their own lack of understanding of how things operate in Australia.

As important as being caring and empathetic are, there are limits to how these play out. There are certain things that are considered unprofessional. These include:

- inviting clients into their own home;
- discussing their personal life with clients in anything but a superficial way;
- going to a client’s home for reasons unrelated to their work;
- seeing clients for purely social reasons unrelated to their work;
- embarking on a romantic or sexual relationship with a client.

It is acknowledged that in all but the last example – which is unambiguously unacceptable - there are some grey areas, in particular for workers who are also members of their clients’ community and for workers in country towns where work-life boundaries are often more blurred. Workers in such situations are advised to speak to their supervisor about their circumstances and agree on what is acceptable and unacceptable.

Suggested Activity

Brainstorm the following questions with the class:

- What are the boundaries a professional worker should maintain?
- Why are there boundaries?
- How do boundaries protect the client?
- How do boundaries protect the worker?
- What are some of the consequences of breaching boundaries?
- As a worker, how can you work out what boundaries you should not cross?
- What do you do if you think you might have crossed a professional boundary?

Vicarious Traumatisation

_Those of us who work with victims have seen or heard some of the worst that human beings do to other human beings. We have lost the luxury of innocence._

‘Vicarious trauma’ is the term used to describe a common phenomenon in the helping professions that comes about because the empathy that workers need in order to engage effectively with their clients leads them to internalise their clients’ trauma and in so doing, become traumatised themselves.

While the symptoms of trauma need to be recognised as culturally diverse and specific, trauma reactions are generally divided into three categories:?

- **Intrusive reactions:** dreams/nightmares, flashbacks, obsessive thoughts, physiological reactions and other persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic event;

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• **avoidant reactions:** general numbing unresponsiveness and avoidance (particularly to things related to the traumatic material); and

• **hyper-arousal reactions:** hyper-vigilance and difficulty concentrating.

Workers may also experience the following one or more of the following:

- anxiety;
- depression;
- sleeping problems;
- de-personalisation;
- 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 abuse.

Connected to these experiences, vicarious traumatisation may also involve a change in a person’s beliefs about themselves, the world, and other people within it. This is known in the psychological field as changes in their ‘cognitive schema’, and may involve:

- feeling that the world is no longer a ‘safe place’ (for themselves and/or others);
- feeling helpless in regard to taking 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;
- colleagues and the workplace environment;
- personal relationships.

It is often hard to recognise when you are suffering from … or slipping into … vicarious traumatisation. That is 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;
• watch out for signs of traumatisation in those with whom you work ... and if you are worried about them ... don't ignore it, do something (see below).

**Self-Care Strategies**

**NOTE:** *This might be the last topic covered but it is also one of the most important. Make sure you leave time for it and stress its importance to the participants.*

While some degree of vicarious traumatisation is pretty much an inevitable part of working with refugees and other forced migrants, suffering as a result of it should not be. There are many things you can do to avoid its worst effects and if it does creep up on you, there are other things that can be done to reclaim your equanimity.

An important thing to remember if you are working in any kind of helping profession is that you should regard your work as a marathon, not a sprint. Your mind and body have to be there for the long haul and therefore you must do things to take care of both.

Understanding and responding to your own needs is the essence of an effective self-care strategy and learning to balance work and play is an important place to begin. People who work in stressful helping environments often find it difficult to:

• leave the office: you never feel you have done enough so there is the tendency to stay back and try to do more;
• leave work at work: when you do get home you replay situations or conversations in your head, continue to think about 'work things' feel guilty about relaxing when there is a pile of work in your table.

Setting boundaries around 'work time' and 'my time' is the essential first step to regaining control over your life.

Equally important is caring for yourself. There’s lots of advice about this floating around but essentially it boils down to three key components:

• **Physical Self-Care:** make sure you have enough sleep, eat well, engage in regular exercise and take time off work when sick.
• **Psychological Self-Care:** do things unrelated to your work to provide some balance. Also take some time out to reflect upon how you are feeling about things ... and do something if you think you are feeling stressed (see below).
• **Emotional Self-Care:** spend time with friends, do fun things and allow others to give you affirmation. It is also important to remind yourself that while you might be dealing with sad things, the world is not falling apart everywhere and not everyone is mad. Remember that, although bad things happen and people are affected, there is a lot of good that goes on as well. Work to look for the good in people and situations. Remember the good you are doing.

Many workplaces offer staff ‘supervision’ or some other form of activity that provides an opportunity for staff members (individually or in a group), to reflect upon the work they have been doing.

Some people are wary about this, thinking that it is ‘all too touchy-feely for their liking’ or that it implies they are not doing their job well. Nothing can be further from the truth. Workplace supervision provides an opportunity for the worker to:
• reflect on their work in a safe, non-judgemental environment;
• talk through problems they are having with clients, other staff members, their boss and try to find constructive ways to resolve these;
• identify areas in which they would benefit from professional development;
• think about how they are coping with their workload and identify coping strategies;
• ask for help if required.

Concluding Exercise

Ask the participants to reflect upon the things they will take away with them from this course. You might wish to divide their suggestions into FACTS (i.e. knowledge), SKILLS and ATTITUDES.

Then, as a final task, ask the participants to write down a list of things they commit to do in order to look after themselves and avoid burnout.

References


Participant Activities

1. In the light of the reflection in class about the way others perceive you, how will you manage this with clients?

2. What do you think will be the most challenging ‘boundary’ issue you will need to manage in your work? Why is this the case and what can you do about it?

3. Have you ever been traumatised (eg by a car accident, witnessing a violent crime)? How did this make you feel? How did you work through these feelings?

4. How do you recognise when you are stressed? Does your body tell you?

5. Do you have any self-care strategy, and if so, what are they?

6. Make a list of the things you pledge to do to ensure you take care of yourself in the workplace:
Appendix:

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.

74 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, multi-faith 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’.

**Refugee**
Any person who has left their own country of nationality due to an established fear of being persecuted on the basis of ethnicity, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable to, or is unwilling to return to it.

**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).
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