



Engaging
Arabic Speaking
Communities Within
Mental Health Services

CALD Toolkit

Service Provision
Recommendations

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Service Provision Recommendations

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This guide looks at the steps your organisation can take to ensure the services you provide reflect the needs of the Arabic speaking communities (ASC) you seek to work with. It explores the importance of cultural competency, hiring bilingual staff and utilising translation services. This guide was created for engaging with ASCs, but many of the recommendations could be used for other culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This guide is provided in condensed format, refer to *Chapter 4: Service Provision Recommendations* of the **CALD Toolkit** for the full text.

Cultural competency

Cultural competency is an important foundation for organisations providing services to CALD communities. By using a framework of cultural competency, your organisation can ensure key areas of need are considered and met.

There are a number of helpful resources that can be used to explore your organisations current cultural capabilities and provide recommendations about how you can implement further training with your staff.

Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA)⁴⁰ and The Australian Relationships Clearinghouse⁴² are both great resources defining cultural competency and providing recommendations about how organisations can begin to implement this within their institutions.

Another comprehensive and interactive resource organisations can use is Embrace Australia's *Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia: Towards culturally inclusive service delivery*.⁴¹ This is a step-by-step resource service managers may utilise to access and build upon the quality of existing cultural competency across organisations or programs.⁴¹

Quote from Community Staff co-design participant :

"We need to be asking clients during the intake stage what they need to make them feel comfortable and safer."

Bilingual staff

Bilingual staff are an intrinsic part of building meaningful engagement with CALD communities. To establish required skillsets and qualifications for staff, you could start by answering the following questions:

- What are the cultural needs of our current clients?
 - > What cultures are represented?
 - > Which clients would be more comfortable with a staff member who spoke their language and/or was from the same cultural background?
- What staff do we have that currently meet these needs?
- What future CALD communities are we hoping to engage in our programs?

By intentionally seeking and nurturing bilingual staff from diverse cultures you are ensuring that your service remains culturally competent and has the ability to provide meaningful and relevant services for larger and more diverse populations. It also demonstrates an organisation that prioritises your CALD clients, which can contribute to your marketability.⁴³



Considerations when seeking to hire bilingual staff

- When advertising for bilingual staff specify that second language skills and connections with community are an important part of the role.
- Including the word 'bilingual' in the role title is encouraged, especially within front line positions, for example, 'Bilingual Case Worker' or 'Arabic speaking Support Worker'. This provides clear expectation of the need for the employee to utilise their cultural background, connections, and language skills.
- Think about the placement of your advertisements in order to reach CALD audiences. This may include advertising across community groups, CALD networks, ethnic media and settlement services agencies.

Q. Which of the following are most important to you when choosing a culturally appropriate service?

	15-25		25-60		60+	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Arabic Peer Workers with lived experience	1		5	3	1	
Bilingual Staff		1	2	2		1
Confidentiality, Bilingual Staff	8		31	7	13	2
No Response	2	2	20	9	8	6
Other			1			
Quality of Service	8		20	7	3	4
Reputation of the company	1			2		
Staff who are the same cultural background as you	2	1	9		3	

As referenced within Survey Findings of the CALD Toolkit





Bilingual staff profiles

Some ways to assess the suitability of a potential candidate during the screening and recruitment process is to consider the following:

- Providing a case study to the candidate that reflects the profile of your current CALD clients.
- Time spent working within community services can be as valued a skill than education background.
- Invite current clients to attend the interview panel. This can also be helpful if you will be linking a client with the candidate.
- Ask questions about the client's views on Arabic speaking cultures and religious groups other than their own. This can determine any internal bias or discrimination across other Arabic speaking communities, due to the complex array of civil conflicts, faith-based diversity and cultural sub-divisions that exist within Arabic speaking countries.
- Consider what age bracket you would like a candidate to be. As discussed, respect for elders is prominent within the Arabic speaking culture, while an older staff may be able to be matched to a younger client, older clients may prefer to be matched with an older staff member as they would be more likely to engage openly in recovery recommendations and support.
- Consider cultural and religious influences that determine which gender the client prefers their staff to be. People who follow the Islamic faith require staff to be of the same gender in most cases, as they are not able to interact with the opposite gender alone. This is why utilising the **SICAS model** is important, as requirements of CALD clients are able to be assessed appropriately. Please refer to *SICAS Questionnaire – A Worker's Guide* for more information.

Interpreting services

To effectively communicate with people from diverse cultures, it is important that the use of interpreting services is integrated within your organisation. Training on how to utilise interpreting services should be integrated within onboarding processes.

This will encourage staff to utilise interpreting services more to assist in their service delivery as well as reduce reliance on bilingual staff to translate on behalf of other employees. This will also build the capacity of non-CALD identifying staff to work across diverse needs and facilitate the development of a more skilled workforce.¹⁰

Translated materials

In addition to translated marketing material, it is important to translate all compliance, induction, feedback, fact sheets and information packages that are provided to CALD clientele.⁴⁴

Intake processes / Screening tools

It is important for organisations to ensure that intake systems reflect the language and cultural needs of the clientele they are serving. They should include the following:

- Culturally appropriate intake processes include assessment of a client's level of Social Integration and Cultural Affiliation. For a brief guide, please refer to the Social Integration and Cultural Affiliation Scale (*SICAS*) *Questionnaire – A Worker's Guide* for more information and *SICAS Questionnaire Excel Sheet* for the formal assessment tool.
- A client should be asked clearly if they prefer phone, in person or bilingual staff to provide their translating needs during the client's first meeting with the organisation or the intake assessment itself. Providing a choice can ease fears around lack of confidentiality. Checking in with the client verbally or through survey forms after utilising

interpreting services also allows the organisation to obtain feedback about their translating services.

- Clear information about complaints and feedback processes should be provided. Due to language and literacy barriers for some CALD cohorts, there should be translated forms and information available on company websites. There should also be clear information about the appropriate place to make a complaint or provide feedback.
- Clear information regarding confidentiality and mandatory reporting requirements. This information should be accessible in written translated format and should be reiterated to clients at least annually.
- Ask about any outstanding considerations that should be incorporated into the client's service delivery based on their cultural, religious or language needs. Provide reassurance that these

considerations can be reviewed and changed at any point during their service delivery and provide clear instructions about how they may do so.

- Utilise translated mental health screening tools such as the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS), General Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), Refugee Health Screener 15 and Kessler 10 assessment. Transcultural Mental Health Services provide translated versions of these assessments across languages including Arabic.^{2, 9, 42, 45, 46}

Training opportunities

Organisations should invest in cultural competency training for staff. FECCA provide a great list of training within their Cultural Competency in Australia guide.^{39, 40}

Quotes from the Community Staff co-design sessions:

"Trust is built around good listening, no discrimination and takes time."

"We can look to organisations who have been serving the community for a while to give us a good example of how to do things well."

"We need to be asking clients during the intake stage what they need to make them feel comfortable and safer."

"Having organisational policies that promote cultural accommodation and respect is crucial."

"Because men can represent their families and communities in a lot of spaces, accessing women and youth can provide a deeper understanding of the needs of the community."

"You can always teach skill and knowledge but it's rare to change someone's internal bias. We need to ensure staff are respectful and respect the client's cultural values."

Choose different, choose wellways

At Wellways, our experience in both mental health and disability allows us to provide supports and understand your physical and emotional needs.

OVER 40 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

40

Wellways has been working for people with mental health issues, disabilities and carers for more than 40 years.

MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST



We develop and deliver mental health services including suicide prevention, follow-up after care and housing support programs. We understand the challenges and complexity of mental health issues for individuals, families and communities.

COMPLEX NEEDS



Our experienced and trained staff work with people with complex needs and multiple diagnoses.

WORKERS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE



Many of our workers have a lived experience. At Wellways we value personal experience together with learnt knowledge and believe this contributes to the depth of our programs.

WORKERS WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTIQ+



Our programs aim to meet the needs of all participants who identify as LGBTIQ+ by providing them access to LGBTIQ+ peer and support workers.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN



We are committed to reconciliation, to closing the gap and addressing injustice in association with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Contact Wellways on **1300 111 400** to find out about services and supports available to help you achieve your goals.

Wellways acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we live, work and play and pays respect to their Elders past, present and future.

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