

Communicating

WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) INDIVIDUALS



Everyone has a culture, although many people and communities suffer from cultural blindness. Ask them about the culture of their town or city and they are likely to respond, “*What culture? We don’t have a culture.*” If everyone around you shares a similar culture, it may be less obvious just what culture is.

Ethnicity is not culture

Many Australians of ethnic heritage identify more with Australian culture than with the culture of their parents or grandparents.

Everyone within a culture is not the same

Our culture may also be influenced by our being part of a subculture – a group defined by shared characteristics and values.



27.3 per cent of the Australian population was born overseas – third highest in the world!

Did you know?

The unemployment rate for recent migrants was 6.6% compared with 5.4% for the Australian-born population



Cultural awareness is achieved by asking the right questions to better understand the cultural background and preferences of the **individual**.

Strategies to support verbal communication

Don't

- ✗ Make assumptions about a person's language proficiency. There is great variation in English proficiency within the migrant population
- ✗ Over-emphasise the language barrier; treat it in the same way as all other communication barriers
- ✗ Speak in a loud tone or pace your speech. This will not help your clients understand English better. Often, it will result in a negative effect or interpretation

Do

- ✓ Listen actively as this will help detect the person's speaking style and clarify the meaning or issues associated with accents
- ✓ Seek clarification for statements made by CALD clients or customers that seem irrelevant or unclear
- ✓ Be aware of people who may transfer communication routines from their first language to English
- ✓ Exercise sensitivity about the effects of cultural differences on communication patterns, meaning of words and concepts

Awareness

OF LANGUAGE USAGE



Graded Language

Graded language is language that is adapted to the level of the audience in some way. For example, in discussing an SUV or 4WD vehicle, it would be best to first discuss vehicles, then cars, then specific types of cars, such as an SUV.

Graded language should be used when introducing new topics. Be sure to use simplified terminology as much as possible in early discussions. In the context of rehabilitation, you could talk about “*ability to work*” rather than “*capacity for employment*.”

Similarly, a vocational assessment may be better described as “*a discussion about your job history*.”



Concept Checking

The objective of concept checking is to allow the individual the chance to participate in the learning process by letting them express their acquired or intuitive knowledge.

Concept checking allows us to determine if individuals in fact do understand new concepts. It draws out what the individual knows through their relationship to the words they understand, so permitting you to add to their knowledge. It also allows you to give a clearer definition for an individual if there is something that they do not understand.

Concept checking is not asking, “*Do you understand?*”



Phrasal Verbs

A phrasal verb is a verb that is made up of a main verb together with an adverb or a preposition, or both.

Typically, their meaning is not obvious from the meanings of the individual words themselves.

For example: “*She has always looked down on me.*”

We might not necessarily need to avoid phrasal verbs entirely, but we should be conscious of how often we use them in conversation with a CALD individual.

How to best offer an interpreter

Effective Interpreter Use

Baker et al (1996) showed that, *without the use of an interpreter in medical contexts, patients reported nearly 30% poorer understanding of their condition and treatment.*

We know that understanding of these aspects has an incredibly strong influence on outcome of an injury.

During the interview:

- ✓ Talk directly to the client, not the interpreter, and maintain eye contact with the client
- ✓ Use the first person when speaking to your client. For example, say *What time did you arrive today?* instead of *What time did she arrive today?*
- ✓ Use clear language and avoid using slang, jargon, acronyms, colloquialisms and metaphors
- ✓ Make one point at a time. Pause until the end of a full sentence. Keep questions, statements and comments short. This allows the interpreter to understand and remember what is being said and to interpret in stages

Adequate use of interpreters is vital to ensuring the successful recovery of a CALD client.