Practice Paper

Working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

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Queensland Government
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Introduction

> *Intervention within a family on the grounds of suspected abuse should not be inhibited or delayed by cultural considerations. At the same time, a knowledge of the cultural framework in which the action or inaction occurred is vital in guiding the intervention and producing a result which is beneficial to the child (from Child Protection in Non English Speaking Communities, Culture – No Excuse, NSW Child Protection Council, 1993: 5).*

Queensland has a culturally diverse population. People living in Queensland come from more than 200 different birthplaces, speak more than 150 languages and identify with more than 100 different religions.[1]

Based on data from the ABS 2001 Census, over seventeen per cent of Queensland's population were born overseas, including 7.4 per cent who were born in a non-English speaking country. In addition, 3.1 per cent of the State's overall population identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

It is generally acknowledged that child abuse and neglect occurs within all cultural and socio-economic groups within the community. At the same time, it is also widely acknowledged that there are a range of barriers to the identification and reporting of child abuse for some parts of the community as well as potential challenges to effective intervention.

The purpose of this paper is to provide departmental officers with information to assist them to work effectively with children, families and other people who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It should be read with reference to guiding legislation and departmental policies as well as the Child Safety Practice Manual and other relevant practice papers.

The focus of this paper is on working with non-Indigenous people from diverse cultural backgrounds. A separate practice paper on working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People is available on the department's Infonet site.

This paper includes background information such as the legislative and policy context relating to cultural diversity, existing programs and services, and terminology used; key practice principles and issues relating to cultural diversity; practice implications; and resources for staff to further their understanding of diversity and to develop links with relevant services and groups.

The paper has been developed as one of a range of initiatives being undertaken by the Department of Child Safety that are aimed at better meeting the care and protection needs of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have been harmed or are at risk of harm. It should be seen as complementing the other initiatives, each of which is important in ensuring the delivery of effective child protection services to children and families from diverse backgrounds.

Some of the initiatives identified in the department's Multicultural Action Plan 2005-06 include strategies to increase diversity within the department's workforce, increased training opportunities relating to working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the dissemination of departmental materials across culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and the development of a policy relating to the collection and reporting of cultural and linguistic data.

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[1] Message from the Minister for Small Business, Information Technology Policy and Multicultural Affairs, Honourable Chris Cummins MP, viewed June 2006, http:://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/multicultural/

Background

Legislative and policy context

> *The Department of Child Safety recognises that many families from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly those with a non-English speaking background, may experience challenges in accessing resources and services, including child protection services (from the Department of Child Safety's Multicultural Action Plan 2005-06: 4).*

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a legally binding international treaty recognising the human rights of all children. The Convention specifies the rights of children in 54 articles and two Optional Protocols.

Article 2.1 of the Convention requires that "State Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status." As of November 2005, 192 countries, including Australia, had become State Parties to the Convention.[2]

The Queensland Government Multicultural Policy 2004: Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference commits the government to promoting "equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all Queenslanders, regardless of their cultural, ethnic, religious background or gender."

The policy notes that "multiculturalism promotes social justice and equity for disadvantaged non-English speaking communities, women and young people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and newly arrived refugees and migrants." It also stresses the opportunities and benefits that cultural diversity offers.

The policy requires all Queensland Government departments to develop annual multicultural action plans with a view to improving accessibility to services and programs and incorporates the Queensland Government Language Services Policy. The language services policy reflects a whole-of-Government commitment to developing communication strategies to inform eligible clients about services and their entitlements, including the engagement of professional interpreters where required.

The Department of Child Safety developed its inaugural multicultural action plan in 2005 (Multicultural Action Plan 2005-06). The plan identifies a range of initiatives aimed at achieving a number of key multicultural outcomes and embedding multiculturalism within the core business and practices of the department.

The development of this practice paper is one of the initiatives identified in the action plan. Departmental officers need to keep abreast of any developments that arise out of the current and future multicultural actions plans as these will further inform their practice in working with children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The *Child Protection Act 1999* (the Act) includes a number of provisions specifically relating to the need to take account of the ethnic, religious and cultural identity or values of the child. For example, the principles under which the Act is to be administered include ensuring that “actions taken, while in the best interests of the child, maintain family relationships and are supportive of individual rights and ethnic, religious and cultural identity or values”; and that if a child is removed from their family, “the child’s need to maintain family and social contacts and ethnic and cultural identity must be taken into account” – Chapter 1, Part 2, Section 5 (2) (d) (i) and (f) (i).

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[2] Convention on the Rights of the Child – Frequently asked questions, UNICEF, viewed July 2006, http://www.unicef.org/ccrc/. Australia is yet to ratify the Optional Protocol on children in armed conflicts.

The Act also includes specific provisions about responding to the language needs of children and families from a non-English speaking background. For example, Chapter 2, Part 3A, Section 51D (1) (f) and Chapter 3, Part 3, Section 106 (2) both refer to the use of an interpreter.

The Child Safety Practice Manual includes various practice guidelines and procedures relating to cultural considerations, and there are also a number of departmental policies that include references to supporting or maintaining the ethnic, religious and cultural identity of the child.

Terminology

> *MDA (Multicultural Development Association) understand the frustrations and concern many migrants and refugees experience by being placed into “categories” or “boxes”, such as CALD …or NESB (from Treat Me Fairly, Final Report of the Complaints on Health & Employment, Equity & Rights Project, Multicultural Development Association Inc., 2005: 5).*

The following information aims to provide some distinctions about the terminology used in the practice paper, and clarification of terms that are sometimes confused. The definitions provided are not meant to be prescriptive.

It is critical for staff working with children and families from a culture or ethnic group different from their own to recognise the uniqueness of all people and avoid stereotyping or making assumptions based on a person’s ethnicity, religion, culture or language. It is also important to be aware of the potential sensitivities around the use of some terminology.

Using terms such as “culturally and linguistically diverse”, “non-English speaking”, or “migrant” when referring to someone could be offensive as it may be taken to imply that the person is being categorised or is not part of the broader Australian community. For example, while it may be accurate to describe someone who has recently settled in Australia as a “migrant”, this would not be appropriate after a certain period of time unless the person chooses to self-identify in that way.

Culture/cultural identity

There are many different definitions of “culture”. One quite useful definition of culture is “an integrated pattern of human behaviour that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group”.[3]

There are a number of important considerations that need to be kept in mind in relation to “culture” and “cultural identity”, including that:

- everyone has a cultural identity, however it is not always recognised or defined by the person themselves. Sometimes, culture is seen simply as “just the way we do things”;
- culture and cultural identity are dynamic and constantly changing;
- while culture plays an important role in influencing beliefs, values and behaviour, there are a number of other factors that are also important - these factors are referred to in a later section of the paper;

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[3] Cross, T.L., Bazron, B.J., Dennis, K.W. & Isaacs, M.R. (1989). Toward a culturally competent system of care, as cited by Mo Yee Lee in A Solution-Focused Approach to Cross-Cultural Clinical Social Work Practice: Utilizing Cultural Strengths (2003: 385)

- given these other factors, there are differences within any culture;
- people may be influenced by and identify with more than one culture or cultural group; and
- it is the choice of the individual as to which culture they identify with regardless of their cultural background.

What is critical is to avoid making assumptions and stereotyping a person because of a perception that they have a particular cultural background or even where they self-identify as belonging to a particular cultural or ethnic group. However, this is not to discount the importance of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic identity as an essential consideration when working with diverse children and families in ensuring that actions are taken in the best interests of the child.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)/Non-English Speaking Background (NESB)

The term "culturally and linguistically diverse" (CALD) is commonly used to describe people who have a cultural heritage different from that of the majority of people from the dominant Anglo-Australian culture, replacing the previously used term of people from a "non-English speaking background" (NESB).

The term CALD is more inclusive, although less specific than NESB and is generally used in this paper. It can also be taken to reflect the diversity of the entire population.

Migrant

Migrants are people who have left "their country of origin voluntarily to seek a better life for a range of personal and economic reasons. They have made the choice to leave, had the chance to plan and prepare for migration and generally can return at any time if they wish."[4]

Refugee

The United Nations 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 (or her) nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself (or herself) of the protection of that country…".[5]

Unlike migrants who have chosen to leave their country of origin, refugees are forced to flee in order to survive. Furthermore, refugees do not have the same opportunity or time to plan for their move to Australia that migrants have, and may never be able to return to their home country.

Refugees are resettled under Australia's humanitarian program, mainly through Offshore Resettlement whereby people are generally referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. There are a number of different permanent and temporary humanitarian visa categories with differing requirements and access to supports and services.

Where people have arrived without authorisation and are subsequently granted protection because they have been assessed as being a refugee, they are generally granted a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) in the first instance, which provides temporary residence for three years. TPV holders are not able to access Commonwealth funded settlement services.

It is important to note that, despite the Australian Government's position, the Queensland Government has a policy of treating TPV holders as having the same rights to access services as any other refugee who is granted permanent residency. The Queensland Government Policy Position on TPV Holders can be viewed on the Department of the Premier and Cabinet website (details provided at the end of the paper.)

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[4] Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, Information Sheet No.11 – Refugee and CLD Young People: Definitions
[5] The 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

Asylum seeker

An asylum seeker is someone who has applied for recognition and protection as a refugee, but has not had their refugee status confirmed. Some people seek asylum having arrived in Australia on a visitor's visa or student visa, while others arrive without an authorised entry visa.

The Australian Government's response to people seeking refugee status is varied and may include the granting of bridging visas and allowing the person to live in the community while their application is processed, through to holding them in a detention centre until their application is processed.

Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minor

An unaccompanied humanitarian minor is a person under 18 years of age who has been granted a visa under Australia's humanitarian program and who does not have a parent to care for them in Australia. Unaccompanied minors may have entered Australia as either a refugee or asylum seeker.

An unaccompanied minor may be an "unaccompanied ward" or an "unaccompanied non-ward". Unaccompanied wards do not have a parent, or a relative who is over the age of 21 years, to care for them in Australia and the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (the Minister) is their guardian. Unaccompanied non-wards do not have a parent but do have a relative over the age of 21 years to care for them, and the Minister is not their guardian.

Overview of cultural diversity and services

> *Over six million migrants have come to Australia since the end of World War II. This mosaic of cultures has created a nation unique in its diverse composition (from Cultural Diversity and Civic Participation in Queensland, Gopalkrishnan: 6).*

The 2001 ABS Census found that:

- 17.1 per cent (603,800) of Queensland's population were born overseas;
- 7.4 per cent (261, 297) were born in a non-English speaking country; and
- 32.3 per cent (1 158,532) of people present in Queensland on Census night had at least one parent born overseas. [6]

Queenslanders who may identify as being from a culturally and linguistically diverse background include recently arrived migrants and refugees, migrants and refugees who have lived in Australia for some time, as well as people whose parent/s or earlier ancestors migrated to Australia. The latter are sometimes referred to as second or third generation Australians.

Australian South Sea Islanders are another distinct cultural group with a unique history who are part of Queensland's diverse population. Australian South Sea Islanders are descendants of South Sea Islanders who were brought to Australia between 1863 and 1904 to work as indentured labourers. The community was mostly unacknowledged until the 1990's. In 2000, the Queensland Government issued a Recognition Statement of the Australian South Sea Islander Community.

The 2001 ABS Census recorded 0.1 per cent (2,438) of Queensland's population as being Australian South Sea Islanders, however this figure is not accurate. It is estimated that there are between 12,000 and 20,000 Australian South Sea Islanders in Australia, with the majority residing in Queensland.[7]

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[6] Queensland Government Multicultural Policy Implementation Guidelines, Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet (2005: 6)

[7] About Australian South Sea Islanders, Department of the Premier and Cabinet website, viewed July 2006, http://www.

Geographic location

People born overseas live in many locations around Queensland. However, according to the 2001 Census, eight of the top ten local government areas (LGAs) with the highest proportion of the population being born overseas were located in the south-east corner of the State. The following are the figures for the fifteen LGAs with the highest proportion of overseas-born residents from both English speaking and non-English speaking countries[8]:

- Logan (24.9%), Gold Coast (24.5%) and Brisbane (22.7%) with the highest proportion;
- Redcliffe (19.9%), Redland (19.9%), Noosa (18.9%), Cairns (17.7%), and Beaudesert (17.3%) each with a proportion higher than the State average; and
- Maroochy (17.0%), Mareeba (16.9%), Caloundra (16.7%), Douglas (16.7%), Caboolture (15.2%), Pine Rivers (15.2%) and Hervey Bay (15.1%).

There were a further twenty LGAs with a proportion higher than 10 per cent.

Birthplaces of overseas-born persons

More overseas-born Queenslanders came from North-West Europe than any other major country grouping, followed by Oceania – mostly from New Zealand, and Southern and Eastern Europe.

While New Zealand and the United Kingdom have continued to be the main overseas birthplaces of migrants to Queensland, there have been some changes in the other main source birthplaces over the past decades. For example, a significant proportion of migrants to Queensland who arrived before 1991 came from European countries such as Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, while between 1991 and 2001 the number of migrants from Asian countries such as Taiwan and Japan increased proportionally. [9]

Figures published by the ABS in March 2006 for migration to Australia as a whole showed that for the period between 1996 and 2005, the major region with the largest growth was Sub-Saharan Africa, with an annual average increase of 6 per cent. Also, of the 50 most common countries of birth:

- persons born in Sudan had the largest average annual increase of 28 per cent, followed by;
- persons born in Afghanistan (12 per cent), Iraq (10 per cent), and Zimbabwe and Pakistan (8 per cent each).[10]

Migration category

Australia's permanent immigration program which is administered by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) has two components, the Migration Program and the Humanitarian Program. The former includes a skilled migration stream; a family migration scheme under which people are sponsored by a relative; and a special eligibility stream for former residents wanting to return to Australia. The Humanitarian Program is applied to refugees and other people with humanitarian needs.

Figures from DIMA show that over 83 per cent of the 9,136 persons arriving in Queensland in 2004-05 entered under the skilled or family migration schemes. Non-visaed permanent arrivals, for example, New Zealanders (including Pacific Islanders who are New Zealand citizens), are not included in this data.

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premiers.qld.gov.au/multicultural/assi/about/

[8] Diversity Figures, A statistical snapshot of the diversity of Queensland's population, Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Office of Economic and Statistical Research, Queensland Treasury

[9] Diversity Figures, Office of Economic and Statistical Research/Multicultural Affairs Queensland

[10] 3412.0 – Migration, Australia 2004-05, Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006)

Services and organisations

There are many services and community organisations that work with migrants, refugees and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. A number of these receive funding from the Commonwealth and State governments.

Settlement Services

DIMA provides funding through migrant community services to assist migrants and humanitarian entrants, which is targeted at meeting the settlement needs of recently arrived humanitarian entrants and family stream migrants who have limited English proficiency.

The funding has been provided under two programs, one for the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC)/ Migrant Resource Agency (MSA) network and another for the Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS). From 1 July 2006, these two schemes are being merged and will be known as the Settlements Grant Program.

Services funded under the MRC/MSA network and CSSS have included the provision of settlement information, orientation and referral services to recently arrived migrants and refugees; facilitating community capacity building; and promoting awareness of the needs of the migrants and refugees to mainstream providers.

Commonwealth funded settlement support to refugee and humanitarian entrants is provided for up to 6 months after their arrival in Australia and includes support with initial information and orientation; immediate and long-term accommodation; establishing a household; and early health assessment and intervention.

Due to the nature of settlement work, settlement workers may be directly involved in supporting families that disclose or present child protection issues. Settlement workers and services can provide an important link for departmental officers in both responding to and providing information about child protection matters for recently arrived migrants and refugees.

Local Area Multicultural Partnership (LAMP)

The Queensland Government, through Multicultural Affairs Queensland, provides funding for the Local Area Multicultural Partnership (LAMP) Program and the Multicultural Community Worker Program.

LAMP is a partnership strategy between the State Government and local governments aimed at creating cohesive community relations at a local level. Fifteen Councils participate in the strategy, and a coordination role for the program is funded within the Local Government Association of Queensland.

Multicultural Community Worker Program

The Multicultural Community Worker Program is a partnership strategy between the State Government and community organisations to support and promote multiculturalism. One of the objectives of the program is to improve the identification, communication and linkage of community needs to government and non-government service providers. There are a total of 20 workers based in organisations at various locations in the State funded through the program.

Other services

A number of other organisations receive funding under more than one program, or are funded under other programs to provide specialist services. A few examples of such organisations are:

- Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ), which is a State peak organisation representing the interests of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

ECCQ provides a health program that is funded by Queensland Health, is one of the organisations that receives funding under the Multicultural Community Worker Program, as well as various other services;

- Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT), which is a joint Commonwealth/State funded state-wide service for people who have experienced or witnessed torture and trauma;
- Multlink and the Multicultural Development Association, both of which provide settlement services and other services as well as receiving funding under the Multicultural Community Worker Program;
- Immigrant Migrant Women's Service, which provides services to women and children of non-English speaking background have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault;
- Family Planning Queensland, which receives funding for the Multicultural Women's Health Education Project on Female Genital Mutilation; and
- Centre for Multicultural and Community Development, University of the Sunshine Coast, which undertakes research in multicultural affairs.

There are also a number of other organisations located around the State.

Some Commonwealth and State departments and agencies also have officers or units which focus on people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. For example:

- Centrelink, which employs Multicultural Service Officers;
- Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre (Queensland Health) which works with other agencies to promote the mental health and wellbeing of culturally and linguistically diverse communities; and
- Queensland Police, who have a number of Cross Cultural Liaison Officers as well as a Cultural Advisory Unit.

These services and other ethnic community groups can be an important and useful resource for departmental officers engaging with or responding to child protection issues in various culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

A multicultural resource directory that includes contact details for services, organisations and community groups is available at www.premiers.qld.gov.au/multicultural/.

Practice principles

The following key practice principles should guide all interventions when working with children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds:

- access and equity;
- valuing and respecting diversity; and
- the welfare and interests of the child are paramount.

Access and equity

> *...many agencies state that they treat every service user and potential service user in an equal manner. However, because of ... barriers experienced by people from a NESB... further measures such as access to a range of specific supports may be needed in order to achieve equitable outcomes (from The ABC of 'Access and Equity', Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association).*

The principles of access and equity are central to an inclusive society in which all people are able to fully participate, and that government services meet the needs of all people who are entitled to them. These principles are embedded in the Queensland Government's Multicultural Policy.

Access refers to the principle that "services should be available to everyone who is entitled to them and should be free from any form of discrimination irrespective of a person's country of birth, language, culture, race or religion."[11] This means that any barriers to access should be removed.

Equity is about ensuring that all people are given the opportunity to access and participate fully in programs and services and to achieve equitable outcomes. It is not about treating all people equally or the same, as this would not necessarily lead to equity in access or outcomes.

Valuing and respecting diversity

> *People from all over the world have come to call Queensland home. The State is growing rapidly and cultural diversity is increasing. One of our great strengths is our diverse community (from Queensland Government Multicultural Policy: Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference, 2004: 2).*

The Queensland Government and the department are committed to the principle of valuing cultural diversity. While much of the content in this paper includes a focus on issues and challenges that departmental staff may face in working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, every opportunity to value diversity in all areas of the departments business should be promoted.

This includes valuing diversity in the workplace, valuing and respecting the positive parenting practices of people from other cultural backgrounds, and valuing the contribution of carers from diverse backgrounds.

The welfare and interests of the child are paramount

> *Many behaviours that are considered child abuse and neglect also varied according to a country's developmental status (from World Perspectives on Child Abuse, Sixth Edition, An Official Publication of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, 2004: 13).*

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a legally binding international treaty that has been ratified by virtually all countries. "The four key principles of the Convention are non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the view of the child."[12]

In Queensland, the *Child Protection Act 1999* explicitly states that the "Act is to be administered under the principle that the welfare and best interests of a child are paramount." All Australians, irrespective of their culture, ethnicity, race, religion or language are expected and required to adhere to the law.

While culture can not and should not be used an excuse to override the rights of the child, it should be recognised that some newly arrived migrants and some members of established communities may be unfamiliar with aspects of Australian legislation, including the legislation relating to child protection.

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[11] Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (1998: 3)

[12] UNICEF – Convention on the Rights of the Child, viewed July 2006, http://www.unicef.org/crc/

There may also be different view about what constitutes child abuse and neglect in their country of origin. This does not mean that the welfare and interests of the child should not be paramount in all decisions,, but rather that differing approaches to parenting and a lack of understanding or appreciation of the norms and standards expected in Australia could be factors that are encountered and need to be responded to.

Key issues and considerations when working with culturally and linguistically diverse children and families

The following are some key issues and considerations that Department of Child Safety staff need to take into account when working with culturally and linguistically diverse children and families:

- people from culturally and linguistically backgrounds are not homogenous;
- the migration experience;
- the refugee experience;
- differences in child rearing practices;
- traditional cultural practices;
- intergenerational issues;
- barriers to identifying and reporting child abuse;
- the impact of racism and discrimination; and
- domestic violence and child protection.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are not homogenous

> *…within any culture there are many sub-cultures…even within a single family, different members of the family may participate in quite different cultures, such as male culture, female culture, children's culture, youth culture, and so on…In addition, it is readily recognised that sociological variables such as race, class, location (eg. rural vs urban), religion, level of education, and gender are all potentially capable of creating cultures… Unfortunately, while most Anglo child care workers would readily acknowledge this level of complexity in Anglo-Australian culture, they often do not extend to other "cultures" the honour of being complex. Instead, what manifests most easily, which is usually the dominant culture, is taken to represent the entirety of the culture (from The Practice of Discipline: The Child's Right to a Culture vs. The Child's Right to Safety, Frey, 2006).*

The need to recognise that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are not homogenous is consistently noted in literature and research relating to cultural diversity. This need refers both to the recognition of the fact that there are many different cultural and ethnic groups, considerable diversity within each of these groups, as well as many other factors which affect each person's identity. Similarly, a person may have a bicultural or multicultural heritage.

While a person's cultural, ethnic, or religious identity is likely to have a significant influence, either conscious or unconscious, on their beliefs, behaviour, values and attitudes, there are a range of other factors that are relevant. These include, for example:

- the person's age, gender, education and socioeconomic status;
- the person's level of proficiency in English;
- the reason for migration and how long they have been living in Australia;
- whether the person is a first, second or later generation Australian;
- the extent to which they identify with a particular cultural or ethnic group;
- the person's level of acculturation into the dominant Australian culture; and
- other individual factors.

Recognising that each child and family will be unique, while at the same time being aware of the potential influence of specific cultural factors, should assist workers to avoid making assumptions based on stereotypes when working with people from culturally diverse backgrounds. Assumptions obscure proper assessments and limit the intervention and the development of trust. Some of the ways in which assumptions can be avoided are by:

- asking for clarification when needed;
- checking that what has been discussed is properly understood; and
- acknowledging limited understanding and asking for assistance to increase understanding.

It is important to realise that stereotyping a child or family on the basis of their cultural identity can lead either to inappropriately pathologising or to inappropriately idealising minority groups, depending on whether the stereotypes are predominantly negative or positive. In either case, it reinforces a sense of "otherness" from the host culture and ignores the complexity of culture.

The migration experience

> *Migrating to a country with little concept of the host culture and language is a stressful experience. It involves leaving behind a family, a place in society, and sometimes a basic ability to communicate with those around you. It can lead to a loss of identity and a loss of self (from Child Protection in Non English Speaking Communities, Culture – No Excuse, A report prepared by the NSW Child Protection Council, 1993: 5).*

It is widely recognised that migration to another country is stressful and involves a period of significant adjustment which occurs over time, which is commonly referred to as the settlement process.

The National Population Council (1988) defined settlement as "The Process by which an immigrant establishes economic viability and social networks following immigration in order to contribute to, and make full use of, opportunities generally available in the receiving society."[13]

Another useful concept relating to the experience of being exposed to a different culture is that of culture shock. Culture shock occurs "when an individual's basic values, beliefs, and patterns of behaviour are challenged by a different set of values, beliefs and behaviours."[14]

There are a number of stages that a person who has migrated is likely to go through as they adjust to living in their new country (Babacan & Gopalkrishnan, Lynch & Hanson). These are:

- an initial period marked by high expectations and positive outlook, sometimes referred to as the "honeymoon" phase. This phase may last from a month to a year.
- a period of dissatisfaction, the "frustration" phase in which there is a realisation that previously held expectations are not being met and that previously used problem-solving strategies are not effective. This phase may be marked by anger, frustration and withdrawal. The phase usually lasts between two and five years, and is a vulnerable phase "where the role of the professional in assisting a person to adjust is important";[15]
- a "coping" phase in which the person has worked out how things operate and what are the norms in the new society, even if they are not entirely comfortable with them. In this stage there are less frustrations and trust starts being established in the new society; and

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13 Babacan, H. , & Gopalkrishnan, N. ,' Post Traumatic Experiences of Refugee women' in Rabin C. (ed.) Understanding Culture and Gender (2005)

14 Developing Cross-Cultural Competence, A Guide for Working with Children and Their Families, Lynch and Hanson (2004: 26)

15 Babacan, H. , & Gopalkrishnan, N. ,' Post Traumatic Experiences of Refugee women' in Rabin C. (ed.) Understanding Culture and Gender (2005)

- an "adjustment" phase where the individual begins functioning effectively and comfortably in the environment and feels a sense of belonging and understanding of the host culture.

Although the migration and settlement experience will be unique to each family and individual depending on a range of factors, there are a number of stresses and challenges that most migrants are likely to experience.

Some of the stresses that many people face during the settlement process include unemployment or underemployment resulting in financial stress; the loss of support systems and networks such as extended family and friends; the need to understand systems and practices that may differ significantly from their country of origin; decisions about where to live and the need to find suitable housing; and in the case of people from a non-English background, the need to learn a new language. Also, in some situations not all members of the family may have been supportive of the decision to migrate.

Much of the literature relating to settlement and migration notes that different members of the family acculturate at different rates. In particular, children often acculturate more rapidly than their parents. This may lead to various tensions including possible role reversals and lifestyle differences between the child and parents.

Women may be more vulnerable to settlement and adjustment problems compared with men, as they are more likely to:

- have migrated as dependents;
- have more limited economic means;
- have poorer English proficiency;
- be subjected to traditional family constraints on behaviour;
- be particularly impacted by the separation from support networks; and
- experience discrimination in the labour market and community.[16]

Raising children is at times stressful for most or all parents. For newly arrived migrants these "typical" stresses will be present in addition to the stresses associated with the migration experience.[17]

A report based on a Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia found that 26 per cent of migrants who were surveyed indicated symptoms of significant psychological distress, compared with 8 per cent for the broader Australian population.[18] One of the prominent reasons for migration for many people is to achieve a better future for their family. However, the various stresses associated with the migration and settlement experience can place all members of the family under significant pressure, and could potentially increase the risk of child protection concerns arising and of family breakdown occurring.

While it is again important to recognise individual differences and to avoid making assumptions about people's experiences, an understanding of the impact of the migration experience and the settlement process is important to ensuring effective intervention when working with people from diverse backgrounds, and particularly with people who have recently settled in Australia. In

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16 Wooden et. al. (1994) cited in Babacan, H. , & Gopalkrishnan, N. ,' Post Traumatic Experiences of Refugee women' in Rabin C. (ed.) Understanding Culture and Gender (2005)

17 Child Protection in Non English Speaking Communities, Culture – No Excuse, A report prepared by the NSW Child Protection Council (1992: 13)

18 The Settlement Experiences of New Migrants – A comparison of Wave One of LSIA 1 and LSIA 2, National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University (2002: 7)

particular, it can assist departmental officers to consider possible situational factors that may be contributing to the child being at risk of harm and to consider the most appropriate intervention.

The refugee experience

> *Refugees have escaped situations that have endangered their lives and their psychological health and wellbeing. Refugees seek a new life in Australia not due to free choice, but in order to be protected. Refugees have to leave their country under extreme and harsh conditions, which does not allow them the benefit that migrants have in financially and psychologically preparing for life in another country. They have often lost family, seen and experienced atrocities, spent years in refugee camps or in transition from one country to another, and ultimately suffered a high level of trauma. Refugees rarely have the chance to make plans for their departure: to pack their belongings or to say farewell to their friends and families. They often have little idea about the country in which they are resettling and the nature of the society there (from Refugee and CLD Young People: Definitions, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues).*

In addition to the usual stresses associated with the migration experience, people who have been resettled in Australia as refugees face a number of additional pre-migration, as well as heightened post-migration stresses and issues as highlighted in the quotation above. Unlike other migrants who have had the opportunity to choose where they would like to migrate to and plan for their migration, refugees leave their home country to escape persecution, often without any possessions. It has been noted that refugees “do not settle as easily as immigrants selected on family or skill criteria, and that they normally endure longer unemployment and poverty.”[19]

Refugees may also have experienced oppressive and abusive regimes in their country of origin resulting in a high level of suspicion and mistrust for government officers and officialdom. Given the length of time that many refugees spend in camps prior to their resettlement, it is also likely that children and young people will have had a limited and disrupted education. In the overcrowded conditions of the camps, children and young people, as well as adults, are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and their health is likely to have been compromised.

Refugees are likely to have experienced any or all of the following:

- denial of human rights;
- forced separation from members of their family/family fragmentation;
- witnessing family members being tortured or killed;
- being tortured themselves;
- exposure to violence;
- physical, emotional and sexual abuse;
- illness and starvation;
- exploitation; and
- in the case of some children and young people, being forced to fight as soldiers.

As a result of these experiences, many refugees develop post-traumatic stress disorder or depression. In an unpublished conference presentation, Peter Shaw from On TRACC in New Zealand highlights the impact of trauma on refugee children and young people.[20] In this paper it is noted that children are not resilient to the torture and trauma, and that young children who experienced trauma are particularly vulnerable to ongoing mental health problems.

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[19] Jupp, J. (2003) cited in Taylor, J. ‘Refugees and social exclusion: What the literature says’

[20] Shaw, P. Refugee Children – Rebuilding Fragmented Lives, On TRACC Transcultural Care Centre (2006)

The paper further highlights that, at the very least, refugee children are at risk of experiencing delays in emotional, cognitive and physical development. The reasons cited for this vulnerability include that:

- they have had their sense of safety violated prior to their resettlement; and,
- despite the relative safety of their new environment, their daily care is provided by their parents and other family members who are themselves often traumatised.

With the significant proportion of African refugees entering Australia under the humanitarian program in recent years, the process of coming to terms with the major differences in the culture and lifestyle between their country of origin and Australia may be particularly difficult. Further, refugees and other migrants who are visibly different are also particularly vulnerable to racism, and some members of the community have a negative attitude towards refugees based on a perception that they are all “boat people” and “illegal”.

These factors are also likely to be issues for many asylum seekers, who have the added stress of uncertainty in relation to their application for protection and the often negative portrayal of asylum seekers. In addition, people who have been detained while their application for refugee status has been processed may also have experienced additional trauma.

For Temporary Protection Visa holders, the lack of access to Commonwealth funded settlement support services and the full range of Job Network services is likely to cause additional stress and difficulty.

It is important for departmental officers to understand the impact that the refugee experience is likely to have had on individuals, and their possible response to intervention by the department when responding to child protection matters within refugee families. For example, the removal of a child from the family may cause significant distress for the child’s parents, especially if they do not fully understand why this has occurred or where the child is going, as it could cause them to relive past traumas.

Differences in child rearing practices

> *To be able to effectively plan and assess cases involving NESB families, workers need to identify their own prejudices and preconceptions about parenting and child rearing methods (from Child Protection in Non English Speaking Communities, Culture – No Excuse, A report prepared by the NSW Child Protection Council, 1993: 5).*

While culture should not be seen as an excuse for child abuse or neglect, it is important to recognise that approaches to parenting may vary considerably across different cultural groups and that the child protection worker’s own views on parenting may influence whether a particular approach is “better” or “worse”.

The literature suggests that although there is broad cross-cultural acceptance that sexual abuse of a child constitutes child abuse, there is far less universal acceptance or understanding in some other areas. One area of child rearing that may be particularly challenging concerns the use of physical and corporal punishment. Views on the use of physical discipline and whether this constitutes child abuse may vary significantly. “Corporal punishment, or spanking (as it is more commonly called), is widely supported throughout the world …only five or six countries worldwide have legislated against any form of spanking”.[21]

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[21] Frey, R. The Practice of Discipline: The Child’s Right to a Culture vs. The Child’s Right to Safety – speech presented at the Multicultural Child Safety Forum, Logan (June 2006)

The use of corporal punishment, including what would be considered severe corporal punishment within Australia, may be regarded by the parent as simply disciplining their child in order to meet their responsibility to encourage the child to become a responsible citizen.

In responding to such situations, it is important that departmental officers do not simply ignore the practice as being "cultural", but at the same time consider the most effective way of intervening. Dr Ron Frey, in an address to the Multicultural Child Safety Forum held in June 2006, suggests an approach that uses a series of questions to initiate a discussion with the parents, or at least a thinking process about cultural issues which may or may not be in the interest of the child. The questions include:

- Does it appear that the practice in question is being committed with the intention of assisting the child (in which case, the parent's concern for the child needs to be honoured however one might feel about the practice)?
- How do the parents explain the practice and what do they hope to achieve by using the practice?
- Is this in fact a cultural practice, or is it more likely to be idiosyncratic to the parent or family? This may require advice from a person from the particular culture.
- Even if it is widely practised within a culture, is it nonetheless controversial within the culture (as is corporal punishment within the Anglo-Australian culture)?
- Are there other practices which are safer which might achieve the same results without endangering the child?
- How open is the parent to considering these alternatives, particularly if they believe that doing so might assist their child?
- Is there reason to believe that this practice distresses, endangers, or has a negative impact on the child?
- Who has the best relationship with the parents to raise these concerns?

It is also important to note that the structure and definition of the family may vary significantly across different cultures. These variations may relate to connections with other kin, marriage patterns and norms, approaches to divorce and re-marriage, and the roles of family members.[22]

There may be varying views about the age at which a child can be left unsupervised or even left to supervise other children based on cultural norms, as well as cultural differences relating to views about who is responsible for parenting, with some cultures seeing this responsibility as being shared by the extended family or even the community. Child rearing practices may also be influenced by a lack of support from extended family and friends that is experienced by some people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, especially those who have migrated to Australia without their extended family.

One of the main challenges for child protection workers in relation to working with culturally and linguistically diverse children and families is to determine when a particular practice that may not be common within the dominant Australian culture falls beyond the point of being acceptable within the wider community's rules and laws and therefore needs to be dealt with as abuse or neglect.

Another challenge is to determine whether a practice that may be determined to be harmful as a result of differing standards and approaches or a lack of understanding of the standards in Australia, can be able be effectively responded to by supporting parents to adopt an alternative approach and when a more extreme response is needed to act in the best interests of the child.

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[22] Babacan, H. Families in a Multicultural Society: Policy and Program Responses (2006)

It is also important to appreciate that, particularly for recently arrived migrants and refugees, there may have been a lack of formalised child protection responses in their country of origin and that the concept of child protection may be quite foreign (see section on Barriers to identifying and reporting child abuse below).

When responding to a child protection issue within the context of cultural diversity, it is also important to be aware of the potential for certain practices to be explained by a parent as being acceptable within a particular culture when this may in fact not be the case.

Some of the ways in which Child Safety Officers can respond to these challenges include discussing the situation with their team leader or senior practitioner; seeking advice from a colleague who is from the same ethnic background as the family; or seeking advice, without identifying the identity of the child or family, from a service that works with members of the particular ethnic community or from a respected member of the ethnic community.

Traditional cultural practices

> *No-one should condone, in the name of culture and tradition, any practice that is harmful to a child. However, there is also the risk that harm may result from inappropriate intervention by ill-informed ethnocentric childcare or health professionals (from A Continuum of Child-Rearing: Responding to Traditional Practices, Koramoa, Lynch and Kinnair, 2002: 416).*

Distinguishing between traditional cultural practices that are harmful to the child and those that are either beneficial or at least not harmful is one of the challenges facing professionals working with children and families from diverse cultures.

For example, traditional health practices such as cupping, pinching, or rubbing (which is also known as coining) which are used for treating a range of ailments amongst many people of South East Asian origin may cause marking on the skin. However, as is noted in a multicultural health resource issued by Queensland Health, practitioners “should be careful not to mistake the …skin alterations and scarring for the results of abuse.”[23]

On the other hand, female circumcision or female genital mutilation (which is often referred to as FGM) is recognised as a harmful traditional practice, and is illegal in Australia. It is identified as a criminal offence in Queensland under the *Criminal Code Act 1899*, Sections 323A and 323B.

In addition to the introduction of legislation, there has also been an education program operating in Queensland since 1997 - the Multicultural Women’s Health (FGM) Project coordinated by Family Planning Queensland.

Female genital mutilation is a traditional practice that occurs within some ethnic groups originating from the Horn of Africa (such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan) as well as from countries in the Middle East, Latin America and Asia.[24]

Some of the reasons given for female genital mutilation include “cultural, gender and group identity, social cohesion, virginity and family honour, necessity for marriage, fertility and cleanliness, beauty, a rite of passage, religious beliefs and as an income for traditional practitioners.”[25] However, it is widely accepted that the practice can result in significant physical and mental health issues for females throughout their lives, including sexual and reproductive health problems.

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[23] Community Health Profile – Cambodians, Queensland Health website, viewed May 2006, http://www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/cultdiv/cambodians.asp

[24] Reyes, A. Girl-child Issues and Female Genital Mutilation in Reproductive/Sexual Health Education in Australia (2003)

[25] Reyes, A. Girl-child Issues and Female Genital Mutilation in Reproductive/Sexual Health Education in Australia (2003)

One of the major challenges faced in addressing the ongoing occurrence of female genital mutilation concerns identifying and responding to families who wish to continue the practice and take their daughters overseas, often back to their country of origin, to have the procedure performed there.

Traditional practices which do not place a child at risk of harm may strengthen the child's sense of cultural identity and should be respected as representing an important aspect of the child's right to culture. However, any "tension…between cultural tradition and human rights should always come out on the side of human rights."[26] Therefore, in situations where a traditional practice causes harm, the child's right to safety and protection needs to take precedence.

Intergenerational issues

> *Because of English-speaking skills and a more advanced knowledge of the ways of the host country, young people may become responsible for facilitating parental contact with the outside world of the host culture. In turn, this may undermine parental authority and status and have destabilising and adverse effects on family stability and cohesion, and a young person's life-cycle development (from Coping in a new world, Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre and Youth Affairs Network of Queensland 2001: 21).*

Intergenerational issues within families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds feature strongly in much of the literature relating to cultural diversity.

While cross generational tension or even conflict could be seen as fairly typical of many Australian families, there are a number of specific factors that may impact on intergenerational relationships within families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. There may be particular cultural views about the roles of elders, parents, men, women and children that impact upon intergenerational relationships.

Most parents, irrespective of their cultural identity, want the best for their children. Many people who migrate to Australia may have made the decision to do so in part to secure a good future for their children. This can lead to parents having very high expectations of their children, including expectations regarding the child's educational performance. As was noted above, the migration experience is stressful, and these stresses can contribute to tension within the family, as all family members adjust to life in a new country.

For some larger families and those who have been sponsored to migrate by other family members, there may be issues related to finding and sharing accommodation with extended family as well as a shared financial burden during the settlement process. These factors may contribute to stress within the family and to intergenerational issues.

Another important factor in relation to intergenerational issues concerns the rate of acculturation of various family members. Children and young people from migrant backgrounds often acculturate more rapidly than their parents, especially if they have migrated from a non-English speaking country. Given their daily exposure to the host culture and language through school attendance, they may become proficient in English before their parents, and are exposed to and take on some of the behaviours and attitudes of their peers who are part of the dominant culture.

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[26] Aldunate, R. Issues for Women of Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (1999)

This can lead to a number of challenges for the family, with the parents sometimes being concerned about their child's loss of cultural identity, and a potential role reversal as the parents need to rely on the child's language proficiency to interpret and negotiate for them in various situations. Similarly, because of various factors such as the financial pressures that face many migrants and the loss of support networks that were available in their country of origin, children may need to take on additional responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings or finding work to contribute to the family income.

These types of situations can potentially place the child in a position of power over the parents, and at the same time expose the child prematurely "to 'adult' problems in the family…without the skills or experience of an adult." [27]

There are a number of references in the literature to parents being concerned about their authority being undermined as a result of interventions by professionals in relation to child protection. Further, young people's access to income support from Centrelink may also be seen as an issue by some parents as undermining them by encouraging young people to leave home if there is conflict within the family. Research from the United Kingdom also suggests that "some minority ethnic parents may use more punitive parenting measures in Britain than they would if still in their countries of origin to try to curb some of the western influences on their children."[28]

At the same time, it has been noted that some families may try to preserve traditional cultural values that they recall from their country of origin but which may have adapted and changed over time in the country of origin.

It is useful for departmental officers to have an understanding of the various intergenerational issues that may be present in families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds when intervening in child protection matters. However, it is also important to be aware of the risk of automatically assuming that any intergenerational conflict is a conflict about "cultural identity" based on differing levels of acculturation between generations, as this can lead to an escalated perspective in which the problem is seen as almost insurmountable.

Barriers to identifying and reporting child abuse

> *Often parents from a non-English speaking background are socially isolated and have little or no access to information about child care and support services. This isolation can allow abuse to be hidden, placing further stress on children and parents (from Child Protection in Non English Speaking Communities, Culture – No Excuse, A report prepared by the NSW Child Protection Council, 1993: 34)*

Barriers to identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect within families from culturally and linguistically diverse, and particularly from non-English speaking backgrounds, are consistently identified in the literature relating to child protection and cultural diversity.

Some of the potential personal and systemic barriers which are most commonly identified include:

- a lack of understanding, especially amongst recently arrived migrants and refugees, of parenting norms and child protection laws in Australia which may differ significantly from those in their country of origin;
- limited ability to read, speak or understand English for some people;
- the social isolation faced by some families who are part of a minority ethnic group and limited awareness of, or access to, support services or to services that would identify abuse;

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[27] Child Protection in Non English Speaking Communities, Culture – No Excuse, NSW Child Protection Council (1993: 14)
[28] Barn cited in Child Welfare for Minority Ethnic Families, The Research Reviewed, Thorburn, Chand and Procter, (2005: 83)

- interrelated experiences of disadvantage faced by some people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds such as financial limitations due to limited availability of affordable housing, employment and educational opportunities and unfamiliarity with surroundings;
- a denial that child abuse occurs within a cultural or ethnic community by some members of that community;
- a fear or suspicion of authorities and government officials based on pre-migration experiences;
- a reluctance to seek support because of the stigma associated with seeking help from outside of the family group;
- a fear of jeopardising the person or family's residency status in Australia, particularly in circumstances where this status is tenuous or not permanent;
- the desire to protect the reputation and standing of the family and the view that problems are most appropriately dealt with within the family or by others within the cultural community, such as community leaders, elders or religious leaders;
- an unwillingness of some professionals to intervene on the basis of an abusive practice being viewed as "part of a culture";
- a previous experience of culturally insensitive interventions by professionals;
- a fragmented approach by services that may work in isolation without linking with existing services that have the trust of families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- gender power imbalances which can lead to abusive situations not being reported due to fear of being judged or harmed.

It is important for departmental officers to be aware of these potential barriers and to consider and implement ways of seeking to overcome, or where possible, remove them. Some of the ways in which this can be done are covered in the "Practice Implications" of this paper.

Impact of racism and discrimination

> *Nationwide data collected by Kids Help Line ...indicates...young CALD people...were 40 per cent more likely to telephone...about bullying, and significantly more likely than their Australian counterparts, to be experiencing continual harassment and bullying often motivated by, or related to, racial and cultural differences (from Coping in a new world, Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre and Youth Affairs Network of Queensland 2001: 19).*

Some people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are likely to have experienced racism and discrimination as a part of their daily life in Australia and possibly in their country of origin. This experience may be even more marked for members of ethnic groups who are visibly different from the majority of Australians.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission defines racism as "an ideology that gives expression to myths about other racial and ethnic groups, that devalues and renders inferior those groups, that reflects and is perpetuated by deeply rooted historical, cultural and power inequalities in society."

Discrimination refers to situations where "a person or a group of people are treated less favourably ...because of race, colour, national or ethnic origin; gender or marital status; disability; religion or political beliefs; sexual preference; or some other central characteristic." Discrimination, like racist behaviour, can be either overt and direct or covert and indirect. Indirect discrimination occurs when "a practice or policy appears to be fair because it treats everyone the same way but actually disadvantages people from a particular group." [29]

Another important concept relating to discrimination is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism refers "to the belief that one's own culture is superior to the culture of other people".[30] While is critical to ensure that situations in which a child is being harmed or at significant risk of harm are not dispelled as simply "cultural", it is also critical for practitioners to be aware of the potential for prejudice and ethnocentrism to inadvertently affect their assessment.

The experience of racism and discrimination is an additional and significant stress factor for those people who are subject to it, and research shows that it contributes to a climate of insecurity and a view of the dominant social environment as hostile and threatening. It also has significant impact on families and children who experience it in terms of their socioeconomic status (for example through limiting employment and educational opportunities), access to goods and services, and their overall participation in and contribution to society.

The experience of racism for children can have a negative effect on self-esteem, lead to withdrawal, feeling anxious and depressed, the rejection of culture and parental values and a sense of confusion about one's identity.[31] For young people particularly it can negatively affect the process of "successfully integrating aspects of both the host culture and culture of origin into their lives."[32]

Research from the United Kingdom stresses the need for an awareness of the impact of racism and racist abuse on some people from minority ethnic groups as critical to working effectively with people who are members of these ethnic groups.

Domestic and family violence

> *Changing views regarding gender roles often leads to conflict and domestic violence may occur. Some men, threatened by the freedoms and new way of life possible in Australia, may resort to violence as a means of maintaining traditional roles, their status as family head, and the power and control that goes with it (from Diversity Training Manual, Immigrant Women's Support Service, 2002: 25)*

There is an increasing recognition that children are affected by domestic violence in a range of possible ways which may include being physically harmed or threatened as well as manifesting negative behavioural and psychological reactions.

There are a number of factors that may be relevant when responding to child protection concerns relating to domestic violence in families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Some people who have migrated may have come from countries and cultures in which gender roles and expectations differ from those that widely accepted in Australia. Exposure to Australian social values which are supportive of the rights of women can lead to many women and girls challenging traditional gender roles.

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[29] Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Website: Frequently Asked Questions, viewed July 2006, http://www.humanrights.gov.au/

[30] McConnochie et al (1988) cited in Babacan, H.: I Still Call Australia Home – An Exploration of Issues Relating to Settlement and Racism (1998)

[31] Racism. No Way: Recognising racism in schools, viewed July 2006, http://www.racismnoway.com.au/

[32] Coping in a new world, Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre and Youth Affairs Network of Queensland (2001: 27)

At the same time, for some men who have been used to being seen as the "head" of the family, this challenge may be seen as particularly threatening to their status and may be heightened by their own difficulties in adjusting to a different culture. This can lead to conflict within the family and increase the risk of domestic violence occurring.

While it is difficult for most women to disclose domestic violence, there are often additional barriers to disclosure for women from diverse cultural backgrounds, including:[33]

- a fear of being blamed and isolated from their communities, families and friends and the social stigma attached to domestic violence;
- language barriers;
- a lack of knowledge of the Australian legal system;
- a fear of not being believed, especially when the abuse is perpetrated by partners who may be respected community members;
- a fear of retaliation and being regarded as bringing dishonour to the family;
- a lack of support networks, especially for women who have recently arrived in Australia, and a limited knowledge of services that may be able to assist;
- the inability of some service providers to respond effectively to women from a culturally and linguistically diverse background; and
- in some situations, a view of domestic violence as "normal" based on past experiences from their country of origin.

Many of these obstacles to disclosure are also relevant for children living with domestic violence. There is a separate practice paper on domestic and family violence and child protection in development currently (mid 2006).

Practice implications

> *There are no recipes or blueprints for working with people from specific cultural backgrounds (from Diversity Training Manual, Immigrant Women's Support Service, 2002: 120).*

It is neither feasible nor appropriate to try to provide a prescriptive approach for working with people from specific ethnic, cultural or linguistic backgrounds. However there are a number of key practice implications arising out of the information provided above for Department of Child Safety staff working with culturally and linguistically diverse children and families. These are relevant across the continuum of child protection intervention, including investigation and assessment, case planning and implementation, review and closure.

Key practice implications are:

- a personal commitment to developing cultural competence;
- the timely collection of accurate information about each child and family's cultural, linguistic and religious identity;
- the development of effective cross-cultural communication skills;
- the use of interpreters;
- establishing links with other services and organisations;
- culturally appropriate placement; and
- enhancing practices to ensure a culturally appropriate response.

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[33] Diversity Training Manual, Immigrant Women's Support Service (2002: 33)

Developing cultural competence

> *It would be wonderful if, with the wave of a magic wand, we could all possess the skills and attitudes that it takes to be cross-culturally effective. But, unfortunately, there are no shortcuts and there is no magic wand. Acquiring the skills is a lifelong process (from Developing Cross-Cultural Competence, A Guide for Working with Children and Their Families, Lynch and Hanson, 2004: 73).*

The term "cultural competence" is increasingly being used in relation to working effectively with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. There are a number of different definitions provided for the term which typically include reference to organisational systems, policy and practice, as well as to individual workers.

The Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice published by the National Association of Social Workers (USA) states that:

> *"Cultural competence refers to the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, race, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognises, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each."*

While acknowledging both the individual and systemic/organisational context, this section focuses on the development of cultural competence at the individual level. Cultural competence at a personal level encompasses the worker's attitudes, knowledge and skills, and requires an acceptance that long-term, ongoing and persistent development is required.[34]

There are three key elements that are commonly identified in the development of cultural competence.[35] These are:

- developing cultural awareness, including self-awareness about one's own culture;
- acquiring knowledge about other cultures; and
- developing cross-cultural skills.

Developing self-awareness and understanding of the influence of one's own culture and associated values and assumptions on behaviour and interactions is the first step towards developing cultural competence (Lynch and Hanson, 2004). This can often be difficult for people who belong to the dominant Anglo-Australian culture, as "culture" and "cultural diversity" are typically seen as pertaining to "others". This process includes acknowledging any personal biases and stereotypes, recognising the influence of cultural norms and attitudes, and valuing cultural diversity and the validity of differing beliefs and values.

Gaining knowledge and understanding of other cultures is another key element to developing cultural competence. There are many ways in which this can be done. Some ways include interacting with people from other cultural backgrounds in both professional and personal life, talking with service providers and community organisations who work with culturally diverse people, researching, watching films or documentaries or reading about other cultures and cultural diversity, and participating in workshops and seminars.

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[34] Guidelines for Culturally Competent Organisations, Minnesota Department of Human Services, (2004)

[35] James, D. Cultural Competence Health Article, Healthline, viewed June 2006, http://www.healthline.com/galecontent/cultural-competence

It is unrealistic to expect departmental officers to gain a thorough understanding about every cultural and ethnic group within Queensland. However, identifying the various cultural and ethnic communities that live in the area where you work and developing some understanding about their cultures may be a useful starting point.

It is critical that any knowledge and understanding that is gained about different cultural perspectives needs to be applied without stereotyping or making assumptions about individuals. As was noted earlier, there are a number of factors other than cultural identity which influence people (see People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are not homogenous).

The other key element of cultural competency is to acquire and maintain cross-cultural skills. Some of these skills include:

- effective cross-cultural communication;
- working with interpreters and translators;
- developing collaborative models with ethno-specific agencies and those working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- establishing effective relationships with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- reflecting on and learning from each interaction with people from different cultures to inform future practice;
- monitoring access to services by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds through data collection;
- identifying practices and systems that hinder cultural competency; and
- identifying and implementing approaches that remove any barriers to working effectively with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

As with the development of cultural knowledge, there are many ways in which these skills can be acquired. The development of cultural competence needs to be seen as an ongoing process, and every interaction with people from different cultures should be viewed as a learning experience.

It is also important to realise that cultural competence does not mean having to like everything about another culture or needing to view everything about a culture as positive. In a keynote address to the Multicultural Summit 2005, Professor Ghassan Hage, notes:

> *I have always taught my students that people that hate people from another culture massively and people who love people from another culture massively have something in common which is that they do not usually mix much with people of that other culture…Interaction is hard labour… Cultural interaction is knowing other people.* [36]

Collection of information about cultural, linguistic and religious identity

> *How people identify themselves is a key to their self-image. For instance, a person born in Australia to Chinese parents may identify as Chinese, as Chinese Australian, or as Australian. It can lead to misunderstandings if practitioners assume rather than ask individuals how they identify themselves, and about the impact and influence of their cultural background on their life (from Diversity Training Manual, Immigrant Women's Support Service, 2002: 118).*

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[36] Professor Ghassan Hage, Multiculturalism – International trends and the impact on Australia (2005), viewed June 2006, http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/multicultural/awardsevents/

The identification and collection of accurate and complete information about the cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of children and families is critical to ensuring that the needs of the child can be appropriately met, as well as providing an important resource for service planning and for identifying any possible gaps in terms of access to child protection and family support services by parts of the community.

As was noted previously, there are a number of provisions in the *Child Protection Act 1999* about the need to take account of the ethnic, religious and cultural identity or values of the child. The timely collection of information is a prerequisite to ensuring that these provisions are met.

It is important to note that officers should not make assumptions about a person's cultural, linguistic or religious background. Rather each individual needs to given the opportunity to self-identify this information by asking them to do so, subject to their ability to do so.

Where a child is too young to be able to provide this information, or there is some other reason for them being unable to do so, the information should be sought from another reliable source, such as a parent. It is also important to note that a person's country of birth is not necessarily a reliable indicator of cultural identity.

At the same time, officers should be aware of potential difficulties that they may encounter when trying to collect this information. For example, some people may for various reasons be sensitive or suspicious about the purpose for collecting this information.

These sensitivities may be able to be allayed by explaining that the information is being sought to ensure that the needs of the child and the child's family can be appropriately responded to, specifically any needs relating to their cultural, linguistic and religious identity; as well as by giving assurances about the department's privacy and confidentiality policies.

A departmental policy on cultural diversity data collection and reporting is being developed.

Cross-cultural communication

> *Communication, both verbal and nonverbal, is critical to cross-cultural competence. Both sending messages and understanding messages that are received are pre-requisites to effective interpersonal interactions. Because language and culture are so inextricably bound, communicating with families from different cultural and/or sociocultural backgrounds is very complex (from Developing Cross-Cultural Competence, A Guide for Working with Children and Their Families, Lynch and Hanson, 2004: 61).*

An understanding of some general principles and guidelines for effective cross-cultural communication can assist staff to be more effective when communicating with children and families from a cultural background different from their own. Lynch and Hanson (2004)[37] identify the importance of understanding that there are cultural differences in non-verbal communication, and of acknowledging cultural differences rather than minimising them in relation to cross-cultural communication.

Non-verbal communication can vary significantly across different cultures, and may sometimes even have an opposite meaning. For example, maintaining eye contact is valued during interpersonal interactions in most Anglo-based cultures, and is seen as conveying trustworthiness and sincerity. However, in a number of cultures, making eye contact with someone in authority is seen as a sign of disrespect, and in some cultures eye contact between strangers may be considered shameful. Similarly, smiling or laughing in some cultures may be used when describing an event that is confusing, embarrassing or even sad.

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[37] Developing Cross-Cultural Competence, A Guide for Working with Children and Their Families, Lynch and Hanson, (2004: 61)

There are also cultural differences relating to physical proximity and social distance; touching and other physical contact; physical postures and gestures. Nodding a head is generally taken as a sign of understanding or agreement in mainstream Anglo-based cultures, however in some other cultures it may only signal an acknowledgment that you are speaking without implying either understanding or agreement. While it is not reasonable to expect anyone to know the range of non-verbal communication patterns across cultures, it is important to be aware of the potential for misunderstanding in these areas.

In some cultures there is a strong imperative to avoiding a display of disagreement and conflict. Individuals may appear to agree to a plan of action to avoid what they experience as an embarrassing or challenging situation, with no real capacity or intention to comply with the plan.

Acknowledging and respecting cultural differences rather than minimising them is important for effective cross-cultural communication, with the following characteristics being identified as common to effective cross-cultural communicators (Lynch and Hanson 2004):

- having respect for people from other cultures;
- making continued and sincere attempts to understand the world from others' points of view;
- being open to new learning;
- being flexible;
- having a sense of humour;
- tolerating ambiguity well; and
- approaching others with a desire to learn.

Some other practical guidelines include[38]:

- use an accredited professional interpreter when a person is unable to communicate effectively in English (see below);
- check and use correct pronunciation of names and the correct or preferred way of addressing a person (for example, formally or informally);
- use plain English and clear enunciation;
- use concrete instead of abstract language and avoid the use of idioms, irony, sarcasm, slang and jargon;
- be patient, receptive and listen carefully to everything that is said;
- avoid any tendency to equate the person's level of language skill or accent with level of intelligence or credibility;
- ask open-ended questions and be aware that the repeated "yes" answers may mean different things in different cultural contexts; and
- make sure that the other person understands what you have said and that you understand what they have said. This can be done by asking the person to tell you what they have understood you have said and by paraphrasing back to them what you understand they have said.

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[38] Child Protection, Students from a non-English Speaking Background, Department for Education and Children's Services, South Australia (1996: 26) & Diversity Training Manual, Immigrant Women's Support Service (2002: 123)

Finally, it is useful to reflect on each cross-cultural interaction to identify those things that went well and areas that could be improved.

Using interpreters

> *The Queensland Government recognises that a significant number of people do not speak English at all or well enough to communicate adequately with officers of Queensland Government agencies... agencies should provide an interpreter in situations where a non-English speaking client has difficulty communicating in English (from Queensland Government Language Services Policy, 2004: 8).*

Interpreters should be engaged in any situation where a child or family member has difficulty communicating in English (see Section 2.2 of the Child Safety Practice Manual – Use of interpreters). Wherever possible, a professional, qualified interpreter who has been accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) should be used. They operate under a code of ethics and have been trained in areas such as maintaining confidentiality and accuracy.

As was noted previously, children sometimes become proficient in English more quickly than their parents. However, as noted in the Queensland Government Language Services Policy, "Children and young relatives are not appropriate in any context." Similarly, the use of other family members or friends of the family as interpreters is also problematic and needs to be avoided. Some of the problems with using family members or friends as interpreters include the potential for embarrassment for all parties, and the increased risk of miscommunication and lack of privacy.

The need for an interpreter may not always be obvious, as some people may be able to converse at a basic level in English but not necessarily fully understand the language used by professionals. If there is any doubt about the person's ability to fully comprehend what is being communicated, an interpreter should be used.

When engaging an interpreter it is important to confirm the language and dialect needs of the client, any gender preferences that they might have in relation to the interpreter and the preferred interpreting mode. Interpreting services may be available both on-site and through telephone interpreting.

Telephone interpreting has the benefits of being more readily available in regional areas and offering access to interpreters in a greater range of languages through a national network. On the other hand, on-site interpreting has the benefit of allowing for visual and non-verbal cues which can facilitate the communication, as well as the possibility of continuity as the same interpreter can be requested and used.

Another critical consideration when engaging an interpreter is to check that the interpreter is acceptable to the child and parents. In some circumstances, especially in smaller or emerging communities in which there are a limited number of accredited interpreters, the interpreter may be known to the child or family which could significantly inhibit or otherwise compromise the interaction.

Some suggested guidelines for staff when working with interpreters that are referred to in the literature include:

- brief the interpreter beforehand wherever possible, explaining the purpose of the interview or meeting;
- allow for the extra time that is likely to be needed when using an interpreter;
- introduce yourself and the interpreter to the client and explain clearly who you are and what your role is;

- speak directly to the client rather than addressing the client through the interpreter and look at the client when speaking and listening to them;
- maintain control of the interview;
- pause often to allow the interpreter to speak;
- speak clearly and somewhat more slowly but not loudly;
- avoid using slang or technical jargon;
- make sure that the interpreter understands any difficult concepts that you are trying to convey;
- periodically check on the client's understanding of what has been said by asking them, through the interpreter, to repeat in their own words what has been communicated;
- summarise what has been agreed during the meeting and check if the client has any questions; and
- debrief the interpreter if necessary after the interview once the client has left.

Further information about engaging interpreters is available on the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's website – www.qld.gov.au/multicultural/

Establishing links with service providers and ethnic community organisations

> *The insufficient partnership between the child safety services, community service providers in child safety and CALD communities was highlighted as a barrier to a better understanding of child safety legislation (from Changing the Wheels: Child Safety Concerns in Queensland, 2005:23).*

There are a number of ethnic community organisations and service providers with strong links to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds throughout Queensland. Establishing links with the various local services and community organisations working with or representing people from diverse cultures can assist departmental staff to develop their knowledge about working with diversity, as well as the particular needs of children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the local community.

Establishing such links could lead to useful opportunities for working collaboratively to support children at risk and families from diverse cultural backgrounds, and facilitate appropriate referrals to relevant services. Services and community organisations may also be able to provide bicultural support workers who can assist both families and departmental staff in their interactions.

When responding to specific child protection cases it will obviously be essential to ensure that the child and family's privacy are protected and that informed consent is given for the involvement of an ethnic community organisation or service provider in each case.

A comprehensive multicultural resource directory is published by Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and includes contact details for ethnic community organisations and non-government services throughout the State. The directory is available at www.premiers.qld.gov.au/multicultural/.

Culturally appropriate placement

> *Inappropriate placements and practice compound earlier harm and leave some young people confused about their histories, culture and identity, with low self-esteem and, for some, long term mental health problems (from Developing Cross-Cultural Competence, A Guide for Working with Children and Their Families, Lynch and Hanson, 2004: 135-136).*

In situations where children and young people are placed in out of home care, it is necessary to ensure that they maintain their links with their family and kin and with their ethnic, religious and cultural identity and values.

Under the *Child Protection Act 1999* (the Act), consideration must be given to placing the child with kin as the first option. The Act defines kin as:

(a) any of the child's relatives who are persons of significance to the child; and

(b) anyone else who is a person of significance to the child.

While placement with a kinship carer may provide for the child's cultural, linguistic and religious identity to be maintained, there are some important factors that need to be taken into account when considering kin for approval as kinship carers. For certain communities there is a strong cultural tradition of maintaining the honour of the family. In these situations it is possible that both parents and even the child could experience considerable shame about the decision to remove the child. This could lead to the family being resistant to a placement with kin, and may not be in the best interests of the child.

Another factor that needs to be considered in terms of placement with kin, especially in smaller communities, is the potential risk to the kinship carer if the family is not supportive of the arrangement.

Key areas that would require assessment in this context include:

- the family members' acceptance of the obligations of being an approved carer including establishing their ongoing suitability;
- whether a family member is prepared to work with the department to protect the child in the face of possible family pressures or conflict, particularly if the parents' contact with the child is restricted;
- the views of the child about placement within the family network; and
- their ability and willingness to meet the standards of care in the statement of standards (for example, the carer is not permitted to use corporal punishment for managing the child's behaviour even if corporal punishment is normally used with the carer's own children).

Irrespective of whether the placement is with kin or with another carer, it is critical to thoroughly consider the cultural identity and needs of the child in the case plan and placement agreement. This should include all aspects of the child's culture, ranging from their continued participation in religious activities and occasions through to ensuring that any specific dietary needs are met. When doing this it is essential to not make assumptions about the child's needs based on a perceived cultural identity, but to check with the child and family.

Enhancing practices to ensure a culturally appropriate response

> *The researchers concluded that what workers need when providing services to families of a different ethnic or faith group from their own is "not so much the need for a set of guidelines about race or ethnicity for workers to follow, but a leap of imagination and extra sensitivity to be made in order to empathise with families" (Brandon et al. 1999, cited in Developing Cross-Cultural Competence, A Guide for Working with Children and Their Families, Lynch and Hanson, 2004:145).*

As has been noted previously in this paper, there are a number of provisions in the *Child Protection Act 1999* relating to the need for culturally responsive interventions across the continuum of child protection. These provisions are supported by various departmental policies, as well as by guidelines documented in various parts of the Child Safety Practice Manual.

This section provides some examples of processes and practices that can be undertaken at both an officer and workgroup level in Child Safety Service Centres to enhance case practice and ensure that responses are culturally appropriate. The examples provided are not meant to be prescriptive or exclusive, but are rather intended to generate ideas that can be applied at the local level.

It is important to recognise that cultural considerations need to be taken into account at every point of contact with children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, from intake to investigation and assessment and to ongoing intervention. Some ways in which this can be done include:

- identifying and actively engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse communities living in the local area;
- identifying any emerging issues relating to child protection amongst cultural and ethnic communities in the local area;
- including discussions on cultural diversity in team and staff meetings. This could be done by inviting guest speakers from a cultural community or from a service provider that works with people from culturally diverse backgrounds;
- liaising and consulting with local service providers working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities;
- utilising the knowledge of departmental staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds about specific cultural considerations;
- assigning case workers from the same cultural background as the family where possible and appropriate;
- considering the allocation of officers to particular cases where issues such as the age or gender of the worker may impact on the effectiveness of the intervention because of the child’s or family’s cultural beliefs;
- encouraging staff members to self-nominate as a key contact person for matters relating to a particular ethnic community. This could involve the officer proactively developing knowledge about the particular culture and links with local members of that community;
- identifying multicultural initiatives in local planning processes, such as operational plans. Initiatives could be included in the department’s annual Multicultural Action Plan;
- monitoring and reviewing data at a local level about culturally and linguistically diverse children and families to identify and respond to possible issues relating to access, level of culturally appropriate placements being achieved, etc.;
- establishing a collection of resource materials that includes information about culturally and linguistically diverse communities and relevant services and organisations within the local area;
- undertaking recruitment strategies aimed at attracting applicants from specific culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that match the community demographic;
- identifying and recognising examples of good practice that have occurred and sharing awareness of these amongst staff;
- discussing individual cases relating to culturally and linguistically diverse children and families in supervision sessions;
- identifying professional development needs and opportunities relating to cultural competence through the Performance and Planning process. These could include participating in cross-cultural training, developing an understanding of a particular cultural or ethnic group in the community, or establishing links with local multicultural services;
- ensuring that families are asked about the possibility of identifying a kinship carer as the first option if a child is removed from their parents;

- recruiting foster carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that are representative of the local community demographic to facilitate culturally appropriate placement options where kinship carers cannot be identified;
- ensuring that case plans fully account for any actions needed to support the maintenance of the child's cultural identity;
- supporting the participation of a person from the child's or parent's cultural community to support the child or his or her parent in meetings;
- ensuring that accredited interpreters are used in all interactions with families who are unable to communicate proficiently in English;
- raising awareness about any systems and practices that constrain cultural competency; and
- generating other ideas for enhancing practices to ensure a culturally appropriate response. For example, holding a workshop on ways in which services and practices can be enhanced to be more inclusive at a local level.

Conclusion

> *The overarching conclusion from social work research is that, irrespective of the broad approach or specific methods used, it is the relationship between the family members and the worker, and the personal and professional qualities of the worker, that make the major contribution to outcome. The particular characteristics associated in many studies with a positive outcome are accurate empathy, warmth and genuineness (from Child Welfare for Minority Ethnic Families: The Research Reviewed, Thorburn, Chand and Procter, 2005: 139).*

Queensland has a culturally diverse population, and child protection services provided by the department need to be inclusive of all children and families who are part of our multicultural society. The development of culturally competent practice is an ongoing process, and there is no recipe or formula for ensuring success in working with children and families from diverse backgrounds.

However, a commitment to developing the skills and knowledge to provide inclusive child protection services and to work effectively with diversity, is critical to ensuring that the needs of all children living in Queensland are met.

Resources and further reading

The list of website links provided below have been categorised under various topics. As a result, some websites may appear under more than one heading. Generally, website links have been provided to specific pages relevant to the topic, and further useful information may be found by browsing through the rest of the website. A list of references used in the preparation of this practice paper is also provided at the end of the paper and may be a useful source for further reading.

Community profiles

Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA)
www.immi.gov.au/statistics/stat_info/comm_summ/index.htm

Diversity in Child Care Queensland Inc.
www.diversity.net.au/resources/profiles/

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
www.cmyi.net.au/UsefulLinks#CommunityProfilesandImmigrationStatistics

Southside Community Services Inc. ACT
www.map.sscs.org.au/

Cultural competence

Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW
www.mdaa.org.au/publications/manual/index.html

National Association of Social Workers
www.socialworkers.org/sections/credentials/cultural_comp.asp

Domestic violence

Immigrant Women’s Support Service – Diversity Training Manual
www.iwss.org.au/resource.htm

Health

Queensland Health
www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/cultdiv/default.asp

Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre
www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/qtmhc/

Health Translation Directory (includes a range of topics including child safety)
www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/

Interpreters

Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
www.premiers.qld.gov.au/multicultural/qldinterpreter/

Queensland Government Language Services Policy
www.premiers.qld.gov.au/About_the_department/publications/multicultural/

National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters
www.naati.com.au/

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) – DIMA
www.immi.gov.au/tis/

Immigration

Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
www.immi.gov.au/

Multicultural Action Plan – Department of Child Safety

Department of Child Safety
www.childsafety.qld.gov.au/publications/documents/multiculturalactionplan.pdf

Other publications/resources

Queensland Government Position Statement on Temporary Protection Visa Holders
www.premiers.qld.gov.au/About_the_department/publications/multicultural/

Local Government Association of Queensland
www.lgaq.asn.au/portal/dt/Community/Sections/Young%20People%20and%20Cultural%20Diversity/lgaq/general/community/CulturalDiversity/youth_resource/introduction.html?Community.setSelected=Community/Sections

Queensland Police Service – Cultural Advisory Unit
www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/community/CulturalAdvisory/default.htm

Coping in a new world
www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/docs/qtmhc/qtmhc_nesd.pdf

Queensland Government Multicultural Policy and Implementation Guidelines

Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
www.premiers.qld.gov.au/multicultural/Multicultural_Action_Plans/

Racism

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
www.hreoc.gov.au/racial_discrimination/face_facts/migrants.html

National Consultations: racism and Civil Society
www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/consultations/consultations.html#othe

Racism. No Way
www.racismnoway.com.au/library/cultural/

Refugees

Refugee Council of Australia
www.refugeecouncil.org.au/

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home

Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT)
www.qpastt.org.au/

Guide for working with refugee young people (DIMA)
www.immi.gov.au/settle/publications/GPP_July2005.pdf

Youth Action and Policy Association NSW
www.yapa.org.au/youthwork/facts/torture.php

Services and agencies

Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
www.premiers.qld.gov.au/multicultural/registers/
www.premiers.qld.gov.au/multicultural/MAQ_Funded_Multicultural_Workers/

Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
www.immi.gov.au/settle/help/index.htm

Community.gov.au
www.community.gov.au/internet/mfmc/community.nsf/pages/section?opendocument&Section=Migrant%20Resources

Statistics

Queensland Government Data Hub
datahub.govnet.qld.gov.au/data_acc/census_prof.htm

Office of Economic and Statistical Research, Queensland Treasury
www.oesr.qld.gov.au/queensland_by_theme/demography/migration/bulletins/

Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
www.immi.gov.au/statistics/index.htm

Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
www.premiers.qld.gov.au/About_the_department/publications/multicultural/Diversity_Figures/

Translated information

Health Translation Directory (includes a range of topics including child safety)
www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/

Department of Human Services
www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/languages/index.htm

Northern Migrant Resource Centre
www.mrcne.org.au/pguide.htm

Department of Community Development
www.community.wa.gov.au/cgi-bin/MsmGo.exe?grab_id=0&page_id=938&que...

Diversity in Child Care Queensland Inc.
www.diversity.net.au/resources/translations

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
www.unicef.org/crc/index_30160.html

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