

Building Culturally Safe Services

Findings from Consultations

December 2022 to April 2023

Introduction

For primary health care to meet the needs of people from multicultural backgrounds, it is important to listen to the views of those who access these services, as well as those who provide them.

To inform WA Primary Health Alliance's (WAPHA) Multicultural Competency and Capability Framework, we consulted with commissioned service providers, GPs, multicultural community members and our staff.

Eighty people shared their experiences of primary health care, both positive and negative. The scale of the consultation was significant in relation to previous consultations we have undertaken, with extremely valuable insights offered.

How did we consult?

We held two online workshops with commissioned service providers in December 2022, attended by 32 people (15 identified as multicultural) from 27 organisations.

In March 2023, we co-facilitated with multicultural consultants Language and Culture Pty Ltd four face-to-face workshops in Kalgoorlie, Bunbury, Bentley and Mirrabooka. These were attended by 48 people from a diverse range of ethnicities and language groups.

We chose the locations based on their large multicultural demographics, with input and advice from WAPHA's Multicultural Stakeholder Reference Group.

We also consulted with GPs via our GP Advisory Panel, and with staff via a survey and an online workshop.



What did we ask?

Participants were asked about opportunities to improve primary health care access for multicultural communities. Community members were also specifically asked to share both positive and challenging experiences of accessing primary health care.

Community themes

Barriers

- Care that is not person centred
- Inaccessibility of interpreters and translators
- Stigma
- Racism, discrimination
- Concerns regarding confidentiality – particularly in small communities
- Assumptions that health professionals from the same culture/ethnic background will be the best fit for the consumer
- Management of/communication regarding appointment time not conducive to provision of culturally appropriate care

Suggested solutions

- Prioritisation of trust and empathy within care provision – the trust relationship is integral to the provision of culturally appropriate care
- The need for services to be welcoming and safe, with an inclusive organisational culture that values diversity
- Focus on quality improvement
- Co-design of services with community members
- Community engagement – promotion of services to local communities
- Ensuring resources are translated and accessible to communities
- Education and training for health professionals
- Health promotion
- Thinking needed regarding how appointment time is managed to support provision of culturally appropriate care
- Implement simple and easy to navigate community feedback mechanisms
- Need for trauma informed approaches

“Having someone to talk to and ask questions in my own language helps me to talk about my concerns and understand what the doctor is telling me. This makes me feel comfortable and listened to.” – Mirrabooka community member

Key elements



Other themes

Commissioned service provider representatives

Key points

- Want to do more to improve competency and provide culturally safe service
- Seeking capacity to co-design services and programs with the local community and cultural leaders
- Seeking WAPHA's guidance on ways to share learnings and best practice
- Want more support for cultural awareness training and upskilling
- Would benefit from the provision of a local list of health services and programs
- Development of culturally appropriate evaluation and survey methods which support data collection

Barriers

- Limited access to translated resources or interpreters with an understanding of health, particularly in regional areas
- Access to translated resources is needed to assist in improving health literacy
- Due to language barriers, time constraints of services/consultations can cause limitations
- Funding allocations within contracts limit funds for cultural training
- Need flexibility in contracts or specific capacity building allocations

"Developing an organisational culture of caring, compassion, being welcoming and safe creates a foundation upon which you can develop more specific and individual approaches, depending on the particular cultural groups you might be engaging with. On a basic level you need those types of attributes." – Commissioned service provider

GP Advisory Panel

Key points

- Need for a culturally diverse workforce who not only speak different languages but understand cultural nuances
- Inclusion of information on languages spoken by GPs and other general practice staff included on practice website

Barriers

- Access to and availability of translated and/or culturally appropriate resources for patients
- Lack of MBS incentives to support additional time and resourcing required for consultations utilising an interpreter
- Availability of interpreters with basic training in medical interpretation, therefore impacting the length and complexity of the consultation

Solutions

- List of specialists and other health professionals who speak languages other than English to support referrals and specialist referrals
- Cultural safety assessment tool for practitioners to assess themselves against and create a plan to improve their practice
- List of local translators in the regions who can provide face-to-face translation services

WAPHA staff

Key points

- 35.2 per cent of staff born overseas and 16.7 per cent speak a language other than English
- Acknowledged leadership team commitment and importance of cultural competency
- Felt WAPHA makes an effort to ensure there is no discrimination in workplace
- Willingness to engage, proactive and positive approach
- There is an organisational commitment to commissioning services to meet the needs of the communities that experience the most disadvantage

What we could do better

- Regular ongoing training cultural awareness, place-based immersion, unconscious bias training
- Support for existing staff and an increased diversity of the workforce
- Flexible policies which allow for the celebration of religious/cultural holidays relevant to staff
- More community consultation, input to program planning and design, culturally safe and appropriate feedback mechanisms
- Showcase experiences of staff and community including best practice

Next steps

WAPHA is finalising:

- Multicultural Competency and Capability Framework and actions
- List of resources to support the multicultural competency and capability journey
- Commissioning Guidelines for providing a culturally safe and inclusive service.

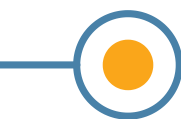
The Multicultural Reference Group will review the first two documents, commissioned service providers will review the third, and WAPHA's governance structure will endorse all three.

Principles informed by the consultation



- Equity and inclusiveness
- Accountability and transparency
- Individual/family/community needs focused
- Respectful communication
- Community led planning and action
- Learning mindset and continuous improvement

Timeline and 3-year implementation



Year 1 focus:
WAPHA



Year 2 focus:
commissioned service
providers



Year 3 focus:
primary care
providers*

* Further consultation may occur during implementation period for year 3 actions.