



Helping mainstream service become culturally competent: Experiences from Australia's HIV/AIDS sector

From Tolerance to Respect: Cultural Competence in Practice

7th of September 2006





Setting the scene

HIV and AIDS in Australia

- Early HIV/AIDS infection known almost exclusively amongst the Anglo-celtic homosexual gay community
- Most HIV/AIDS services oriented towards the gay population
- 21,400 cases of HIV infection in Australia with 14,840 People Living with HIV/AIDS
- 75-80% of the HIV transmission in the Anglo-celtic community
- About 10% notification among women.



Setting the scene

HIV pattern amongst CALD* communities

- Increasing HIV notifications and AIDS diagnosis
- 21 per cent of HIV notifications were among people born in non English speaking countries (2002-2003)
 - Heterosexual transmission 46% (CALD) /Homosexual 43%
 - Women (25%)
 - Late Presentation
- **CALD issues**
 - Lack of awareness
 - Role of culture in determining health behaviours
 - Stigma and discrimination
 - Confidentiality
 - Access and equity
 - Language
 - Legal

* Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

In this session:

- ④ Process of developing a cultural competency package specific to the HIV/AIDS sector
- ④ Key components of the package
- ④ How we implemented the package
- ④ Challenges





© Development process

- Consultation
 - Advisory body
 - AIDS councils
 - Sexual Health services
 - Community organisations
 - MHAHS staff
- Research
 - Australia
 - Global
- Experience
 - Professional
 - Personal



@ Key components of the package

- Levels of cultural competency
 - Community
 - Organisational
 - Individual
- Concept of cultural competency
- HIV facts
- Demographic figures
- CALD issues
- Case studies/scenarios
- Resources
- Evaluation



Key components

- **Cultural competency**
 - Definition of culture and cultural competence
 - stages of cultural competence
 - Identify cultural issues that influence health choices
 - Explore personal attitudes that could influence cultural competence
 - Appreciate the link between cultural competence and working with clients from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds

Key components

- Cultural competency
 - Essential qualities of culture:
 - It is learned
 - It is shared
 - It changes
 - Dimensions of culture:
 - Concrete
 - Behavioral
 - Symbolic



Key components

- **cultural competency**

Definition:

'Set of attitudes, skills and awareness that allow an individual or organisation to interact with clients and employees in ways that are culturally appropriate'.

(culturally appropriate = to provide and promote services that are respectful and relevant to those being served)



Key components

- Case studies
 - People accessing services at MHAHS
 - Community development
 - Ethnic media work
 - Personal anecdotes



Key components

Case studies: Andre's Story

A 30 year old male, Andre, turns up to a metropolitan Sexual Health Clinic with a large gay clientele, requesting support and information.

Andre has been in Australia for only one year, after having escaped from a war-torn country. His English is adequate, and he wears traditional, non-Western, dress.

Andre is married with children, and identifies as a gay man, but he is unwilling to come out to his family and community. He regularly engages in high-risk activities.

Concerned about his lack of awareness of HIV and high risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection, the Sexual Health Clinic refers him on to a multicultural organisation



Key components

- Resources
 - Directory of community organisations
 - Ethnic media outlets
 - HIV/AIDS info in language other than English
 - Services
 - Websites

Key components

- **Evaluation**

Post training evaluation

- Relevancy
- Information
- Usefulness
- Suggestions





@ Implementation

- Training workshops
 - Role plays
 - Case studies
 - Audio recordings of the experience of PLWHA from CALD backgrounds
- Conference presentations
- Reports



@ Challenges

- Relatively new concept
- Resistance to learning
- Lack of time / resources
- Too sensitive / delicate
- Knowledge
- Misperception (read: arrogance)
- Negative attitude
- Lack of opportunity to practice what you learn



Thank you!

www.multiculturalhivhepc.net.au