

Towards Cultural Competence



A framework for human service organisations
and a guide to engage consumers in the process

Barbel Winter wrote this guide, based on work undertaken for MDAA by Hayter and Bray (2008) and Felicity Zadro (2008).

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MDAA is a non-profit peak body for people from non-English speaking backgrounds with disability and their families and carers in NSW.

Cultural competence training, further materials and information are available from MDAA.

First published September 2009

ISBN 978-1-920821-22-7

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Towards Cultural Competence

A framework for human service organisations and a guide to engage consumers in the process

This publication aims to provide human service agencies with a framework to guide them in improving their ability to respond more fully and holistically to the diversity in our communities.

Much of the writing on cultural competence has failed to take into account the impact that changes in individual and organisational cultural competencies have on the users of services. Measures to identify whether the introduction of cultural competence frameworks or plans have made any noticeable impact on service users have typically been seen as too difficult and have not been developed. The consumer evaluation guide developed by Zadro¹ (pages 16-30) offers the first practical guide to ensure that consumers are able to reflect and provide feedback on an agency's progress towards cultural competence.

The consumer evaluation guide is based on a cultural competence framework developed by Hayter and Bray². The first part of this publication therefore introduces that framework (pages 4-15). Based on the available literature, the framework identifies areas of individual worker skills and knowledge and areas of organisational structures, policies and practices which are required for an individual or organisation to achieve cultural competence. On the individual level the framework identifies self awareness, cultural knowledge, linguistic competence and the integration of cultural knowledge into daily practices as the key competencies. On an organisational level the key areas identified are cultural competence planning, human resources development, professional development and training, community partnerships and governance, linguistic competence, service development, continuous quality improvement, data management and policy development.

As a consumer focused advocacy agency, MDAA strongly believes that any initiative an agency takes to improve the cultural competence of its services should be 'felt' by the service users. Without a measurable difference in the quality of service, as identified by consumers, cultural competence frameworks and plans remain largely academic, perhaps aiming to fulfil funding or monitoring requirements. By contrast, the evaluation guide which forms the second part of this publication (pages 17-30) is a tool to measure the effectiveness of services provided to all eligible members of the community. Agencies can use it as a guide to get meaningful feedback from consumers about the agency's progress in its journey towards cultural competence.

¹ The evaluation guide was developed by Felicity Zadro for MDAA with funding provided by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care in 2007.

² The framework was developed by Hayter and Bray for MDAA with funding provided by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care in 2007.

A Cultural Competence Framework

The framework below offers agencies a tool to organise their thinking and actions in their journey towards cultural competence.

“Cultural competence requires that organizations have a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviours, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally. Cultural and linguistic competence are developmental processes that evolve over an extended period of time. Both individuals and organizations are at various levels of awareness, knowledge and skills along the cultural competence continuum.” (National Center for Cultural Competence, 2008; <http://www.gucchdgeorgetown.net/NCCC/journey/action.lasso>)

It is important to point out at the beginning that cultural competence is not a position to be at (after completing and implementing a series of actions and strategies), but a continuum, a way of working and operating which continually seeks to improve and respond more effectively to cultural diversity.

An integrated approach to increasing cultural competence requires change within individuals and organisations. Individuals need to reflect on and change their practices, and organisations need to develop and incorporate policies, procedures and practices that enhance their ability to respond to cultural diversity as core business. Ideally, individuals and organisations working increasingly culturally competently will also have a positive effect on the cultural competence of the larger systems they are working within.

Agencies may like to use the framework offered as a road map or they may prefer to use a different framework. Some may prefer to use a framework based on their particular industry standards, such as the disability services standards. The framework offered here can easily be adjusted to fit most of the current standard frameworks.

For a more detailed discussion about cultural competence specifically in disability services, see Harris (2005) for MDAA: 'Culturally Competent Disability Support: Putting It Into Practice' and also Landles (2003) for MDAA: 'Building Cultural Competence in Disability Services'.

Individual competencies

The following table identifies and defines the main areas discussed in the cultural competence literature for individual competence.

On the individual level the framework identifies the key competencies as:

1. self awareness
2. cultural knowledge
3. linguistic competence
4. the integration of cultural knowledge into daily practice

Individual Cultural Competence Area	Cultural Competence Literature
<p>Self Awareness</p>	<p>Developing skills and knowledge in self awareness is the foundation skill for understanding cultural competence, as highlighted in the relevant literature.</p> <p>Work in cross cultural situations requires more than mastery of technical skill such as memorising facts (Leonard & Plotnikoff, 2000). It requires us to reflect, grow emotionally, understand and recognise our own values, attitudes and perspectives (Dean, 2001:628).</p> <p>'Awareness means recognising that diversity has very genuine effects on organisational behaviour and work outcomes. It is a basic acknowledgement of the need for learning.' (Cox & Beale, 1997: 3-4)</p> <p>Walker (1991) in Fitzgerald (2000) defines cultural competence as '...the ability of individuals to see beyond the boundaries of their own cultural interpretations'.</p> <p>Self awareness also involves skills and knowledge in critical thinking.</p> <p>The steps in critical thinking include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the problem - What's the real question we are facing here? 2. Define the context - What are the facts and circumstances that frame this issue or problem? 3. Enumerate the choices - Which among the possible options are the three or four most viable? 4. Analyse the options to find the best - What is our best course of action, all things considered? 5. List the reasons explicitly - 'Let's be clear: why are we making this particular choice?' 6. Self Correct - Okay let's look at it again. What did we miss?" (Facione, 2004:12)

Individual Cultural Competence Area	Cultural Competence Literature
Cultural Knowledge	<p>Part of the self awareness process and using skills and knowledge in critical thinking is acknowledging and acquiring cultural knowledge.</p> <p>One way for individuals to acquire cultural knowledge is to reflect on how we absorb knowledge and how we understand that knowledge within our individual cultural framework and how this shapes our thinking.</p> <p>Engaging with diverse communities by undertaking joint projects and activities is an effective way to accumulate cultural knowledge. Some of that knowledge may be acquired through explicit learning activities (for example, attending a workshop on Buddhism) or implicitly by working with individuals or a group (for example, working with a group of young people in a local area on a particular issue).</p>
Linguistic Competence	<p>An important part of being culturally competent for individuals (and organisations) is to develop skills and knowledge in linguistic competence.</p> <p>Goode & Jones (2004) highlight the importance of "...the capacity of an organisation and its personnel to communicate effectively and convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse audiences including persons of limited English proficiency, those who are not literate or have low literacy skills and individuals with disabilities."</p> <p>Linguistic competence also includes understanding verbal and non-verbal communication. There can be a range of important matters that affect verbal communication when working with a person with disability and/or their family from a non-English speaking background (e.g. using an interpreter, speaking clearly, avoiding jargon, being aware of words that may not translate) (Harris, 2005).</p> <p>Non-verbal communication is very important. Mehrabian (1968) points out that over 90% of all communication is non-verbal. There can also be important differences in non-verbal communication for people from diverse backgrounds. This can include eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, style of speaking, rate and volume of speech, gestures, and the</p>

Individual Cultural Competence Area	Cultural Competence Literature
	<p>emotional tone (Fitzgerald, 1996). We also need to be aware that these non-verbal cues may be very different when working with people from diverse backgrounds with disability, especially physical disability.</p>
Integrating Cultural Knowledge	<p>This refers to our ability to use and adapt the cultural knowledge learnt and incorporated into our specific context.</p> <p>Cultural competence is all about putting cultural knowledge into practice with individuals, their families, our colleagues and others we meet in our work.</p> <p>Integrating cultural knowledge into our work practices will affect the way we plan, understand our communities, develop partnerships and networks, design and build programs, projects and services that are flexible and responsive to the needs of people from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Integrating cultural knowledge will also allow us to question not only our own practices but also the systems and approaches we use. For example: what are the shortfalls of an assessment tool as regards cultural issues and how can the tool be changed to overcome them?</p> <p>An individual integrating cultural knowledge into their practices will also need to link their learning and thinking into the systems, practices and policies of the organisation they work for.</p>

Organisational Competencies

As identified above, 'Cultural competence requires that organizations have a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviours, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally.' (National Center for Cultural Competence, 2008; <http://www.gucchd Georgetown.net/NCCC/journey/action.lasso>)

The cultural competence literature outlines the main areas of cultural competence for organisations as:

- Cultural Competence Planning
- Human Resources Development
- Professional Development and Training
- Community Partnerships and Governance
- Linguistic Competence
- Service Development
- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Data Management
- Policy Development

Organisational Cultural Competence Area	Cultural Competence Literature
Cultural Competence Planning	<p>'A Cultural Competence Plan for both public and private sectors shall be developed and integrated within the overall organization and/or provider network plan, using an incremental strategic approach for its achievement, to assure attainment of cultural competence within manageable but concrete timelines.' (US Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2008)</p> <p>Cultural competence planning means developing a long term plan to enhance the capacity of organisations to meet the needs of people from diverse communities. One of the most important parts in developing such a plan is involving all levels within and outside the organisation, including governance, management, administration, front line staff, consumers and their families, communities and other stakeholders.</p>

Organisational Cultural Competence Area	Cultural Competence Literature
	<p>Developing a plan may include activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community needs assessment, including a demographic and community profile, and an analysis of current disparities in access and outcomes • An assessment of the organisation’s current ability to provide services to people from diverse backgrounds <p>The framework described in this publication can be used as a framework for an organisation’s cultural competence plan.</p> <p>’Each component must include manageable and concrete goals, operational plans, management accountability, and oversight mechanisms.’ (Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2004:ii)</p> <p>One very important part in checking how effective the plan is (the oversight mechanism) is the involvement of service users. Organisations can use the consumer evaluation guide (below) to check the effectiveness of their plan.</p>
Human Resource Development	<p>People are at the core of our work in human services. We need to be concerned not only about the people we support, but also those we employ. Human resource management involves planning, recruitment, selection, orientation and performance management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for and identify staffing needs for the future, including identifying culturally specific staff and/or staff with specific cultural skills. • Recruit staff from diverse backgrounds, use affirmative action and culturally targeted advertising. • Seek information on culturally specific skills and knowledge during the selection process, conduct interviews so that they do not exclude applicants from diverse communities. • Improve retention of staff from diverse backgrounds by mentoring, using different pay rates (such as payment for using cultural and language skills). <p>“Organizations improve their success in recruiting and retaining</p>

Organisational Cultural Competence Area	Cultural Competence Literature
	<p>diverse staff when they reach a ‘critical mass’ of three or more people from a particular cultural group: This allows for within-group support and for diffusing the stress of an otherwise solitary member who often is expected to represent the entire cultural group.” (Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2004:ii)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use culturally informed consultants, interpreters and cultural brokers to work alongside a worker who is skilled but not knowledgeable about a client’s culture. • Develop a performance management system that incorporates cultural competence as a performance criterion.
Professional Development and Training	<p>Ongoing training and development increases the skills and competencies of staff and aids staff retention.</p> <p>Many of the essential skills needed in delivering human services other than technical skills (such as assessing a housing application) are interpersonal skills. Culturally competent interpersonal skills are very important in working with people from diverse backgrounds. To enhance the cultural skills of its staff an agency can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide ongoing cultural competence training to all staff, including staff from diverse backgrounds. • Provide training and professional development to support staff to become aware of their own culture. • Provide mentoring and support to staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. • Provide opportunities to discuss and develop culture specific ‘modification’ to existing tools and practices.
	<p>Your organisation may use various formal and informal ways to develop relationships with diverse communities, to gain their knowledge and trust, including:</p>

Organisational Cultural Competence Area	Cultural Competence Literature
<p>Community Partnerships and Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involving clients and the community in designing and implementing culturally competent services • involving diverse communities on advisory and/or governing bodies • working together with diverse communities and organisations to provide services to diverse communities (Minnesota Department of Human Services 2004) <p>Working in partnership with diverse communities is a great way to enhance your agency’s cultural competence over time and to link into the communities you want to work with. Working in partnership with another community also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raises the profile of your organisation in the communities • enables you to promote your services more effectively • provides you with access to cultural/religious information, knowledge and expertise • enables you to work together to achieve common goals (MDAA, 2007) <p>The governance structures and representatives within those structures should reflect and be responsive to the diversity of the communities.</p> <p>For effective organisational change towards greater cultural competence, cultural competence needs to be everybody’s business. Everyone in the agency needs to ensure that the voices and opinions of diverse communities are heard and are present in the agency’s decision making. One traditional approach to enhancing the cultural competence of governance bodies has been to reserve seats on the governing body for members of particular minority groups (e.g. a seat for a young person, or a seat for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander). Another approach has been to run advisory boards which advise the governance body (e.g. an advisory board made up of people with disability). Such approaches can be tokenistic and are by themselves ineffective in achieving organisational change towards greater cultural competence.</p>

Organisational Cultural Competence Area	Cultural Competence Literature
<p>Linguistic Competence</p>	<p>On an organisational level linguistic competence refers to 'The capacity of an organisation (and its personnel) to communicate effectively and convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse audiences including persons of limited English proficiency, those who are not literate or have low literacy skills and individuals with disabilities. The organisation must have policies, structures, practices, procedures dedicated to support this capacity.' (Goode & Jones, 2004)</p> <p>Any consumer should be able to communicate effectively with the organisation if the organisation ensures that the consumer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is given adequate information • understands the services and benefits available • can get services for which they are eligible • can communicate their relevant circumstances effectively to the service provider <p>(Minnesota Department of Human Services 2004)</p> <p>It is very important to point out that translations need to be appropriate not only linguistically, but also culturally. Agencies should pay particular attention to the values and intent of their information and how that intent is communicated to diverse communities. For example, if an agency wants to communicate that people with disability can work and are expected to work, it would be inappropriate to use a translation that describes people with disability as 'useless' or 'unable to work'.</p> <p>Information needs to be translated, accessible and appropriate to local communities (Anderson et al, 2003), not simply to the community of origin.</p> <p>Furthermore, agencies need to pay attention to images used in their publications, to ensure that they represent the diversity of the communities the agency wants to serve.</p>
	<p>Especially in the development of new services, but also in the reshaping of existing services, cultural diversity is all too often put on the back burner, with the justification that 'setting up a</p>

Organisational Cultural Competence Area	Cultural Competence Literature
Service Development	<p>new service is hard enough, let's not make it any harder'.</p> <p>For services to succeed, we need to build in and develop our cultural competence right from the beginning, as part of our core business. This includes, right at the start, finding answers to questions such as how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote a new service • assess needs within the context of a client's culture • tailor services to meet individual needs • ensure staff are culturally competent • undertake service and/or case planning that is knowledgeable about the client's culture <p>One important way to enhance any agency's culturally competent service development is to '...maximise the opportunities for client and family directed decision making in the delivery of support and services for clients' (Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2004:v).</p>
Continuous Quality Improvement	<p>All agencies need an ongoing commitment to developing our services in such a way that they improve continuously. Within that commitment we need to ensure that our services meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.</p> <p>One important part of continuous quality improvement is that the agency's overall quality management activities are linked to improvement in its cultural competence.</p> <p>There are many ways to ensure this link including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '...the use of periodic self assessments to measure progress towards cultural competence; and • the integration of cultural competence measures into internal audits and performance improvement programs' (Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2004:ii). <p>(See the Appendix for an example of a simple form of self assessment: MDAA's Factsheet No.6: 'Cultural Competence Checklist for Agencies')</p>

Organisational Cultural Competence Area	Cultural Competence Literature
<p>Data Management</p>	<p>Collecting and managing data is part of the core business of most organisations. Data assists us in managing what we do, in showing us trends and giving us directions. It helps us measure our outputs and the results of our work. We often use data to demonstrate that we have achieved a certain goal and we use it when we report to our funders.</p> <p>Our organisation’s data collection can also be enhanced to identify the specific needs of the diverse populations served. It is useful to collect a whole range of information including, age, gender, disability, ethnicity, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status, language spoken at home, and level of literacy in English and language of origin.</p> <p>Having data is useful, but the question is how can it assist us to become more culturally competent? To do this we must ask a range of questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does our age profile reflect the age profile in the community we support? • Does our profile of people with disability reflect the profile in the community? • Does our ethnicity profile reflect the profile in the community? <p>Your answers to those questions can be either positive or negative, as your answers may arrive from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal circumstances (for example, we are a service for young people; we only support people with a physical disability; we are a service specifically set up to serve the Maltese community); or • External circumstances outside your influence (for example, there are more people with an intellectual disability living here because a large institution closed only 3 years ago; there are no adult Sudanese refugees with disability because they are rarely approved to migrate to Australia). <p>If your answers to questions such as these are negative but there are no compelling internal or external circumstances</p>

Organisational Cultural Competence Area	Cultural Competence Literature
	<p>beyond your control contributing to your answer, your agency may wish to think seriously about the gaps between your profile and the profile of the community and what you can do to bridge that gap.</p> <p>(See the Appendix for an example of how to collect information about ethnic communities: MDAA's 'Factsheet No.16 Who lives in our community?')</p>
Policy Development	<p>Most agencies have developed policies and procedures in line with our reporting requirements or standards for operating. These provide good frameworks to support the development and implementation of cultural competence across the organisation.</p> <p>For example, NSW disability services have to operate in line with the NSW Disability Services Act and the Standards developed under that Act. In line with Standard 4, an agency could develop policies such as 'The agency routinely collects information that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users' and carers' preferred language; • Service users' and carers' preferred medium for communication (e.g. audio tape, interpreter, translated information); • Ethnicity and country of birth of service user; • Birthplace(s) of service users' parents; and, • Other relevant information which may impact on service delivery.' (Landles, 2003)

Cultural Competence – the Consumer Evaluation Guide

Role of the Guide

Cultural Competence – the Consumer Evaluation Guide (the guide) aims to find out and measure the views of consumers of disability services about the cultural competence of workers and organisations they interact with.

To use the guide it is important to understand that cultural competence operates on different levels and is a journey not a destination. The journey is about developing awareness, gaining knowledge and making changes that reflect actions, attitudes and policies.

Talking about cultural competence in an organisation often evolves over time. When this guide is used in organisations which talk about culture, cultural diversity and their effects on service provision the conversations will be different from those in organisations which don't talk about these issues. The guide is effective in both situations as it allows us to find out what is important to consumers and how they see the organisation responding to diverse cultural needs.

Developing the Guide

The guide was designed to find out what makes a difference to the consumer's experience in using a service. The guide was piloted and modified with four focus groups drawn from different groups of people who use disability services. The focus groups were:

- people from a diverse range of backgrounds with different disabilities
- people who share a cultural background (but not necessarily the same language)
- people who share the same language (an interpreter was used for that focus group) and
- a group of carers from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Some people in the groups were connected in some ways with MDAA, others were not.

When to use the Guide

This guide can be used at any time in an organisation's journey towards cultural competence. An organisation just setting out on the journey will get different responses from one that has been on the road for some time. Either way, the aim is for consumers to identify and measure changes made over time and to identify areas for further work on cultural competence.

This guide can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of any actions taken to improve the cultural competence of the service by measuring the consumer's perceptions before and after those actions are undertaken. It also includes a set of questions for the post-evaluation phase, as the guide can also be used to measure progress during a longer-term intervention strategy. The guide should be used in English and, when needed, with an interpreter. It was designed to be used with individuals and small groups³. It includes some insights, suggestions and things to look out for when using it. We do not recommend using this guide as a survey tool.

³ Ideally with 4 – 6 people without interpreters and 4 with interpreters.

How to use the guide

This guide is set out in columns. The first column identifies the area of cultural competence which relates to the questions contained in the second column. The third column explains why the question is being asked. The last column provides some information about what we learnt from conducting the focus groups, including emotional reactions, what types of answers may be given and tips on when to ask follow-up questions. At times, you will find information about where the interview is likely to speed up and where to spend more time.

At the start, explain why you want to ask the person or group some questions and what difference the group or individual's involvement will make. If you are recording the interview, always prepare your equipment and ask permission of the group or individual to use it before you turn it on. Always take notes or have a note taker in case the recording equipment fails or voices are hard to hear.

It is very important that all participants have a broad understanding of culture and you as the interviewer need to ensure that the person or group has a chance to reflect on cultural diversity during the discussion. For example, 'You say there are lots of people from diverse cultures using the service, so what about young people? Do you see many young people using the service?'

It is also important to manage the interview group so all members have a chance to interact and contribute. At the end be sure to thank the people involved properly.

This is a guide to get to the heart of how cultural competence in services makes a difference to the lives of people with disability. As the interviewer, it is important to be prepared and to expect that unique perspectives, issues and experiences will come up. To get good results it is important to explore those experiences, and to be guided by the interviewee on how far and how deeply you can go.

A Consumer Evaluation Guide

Individual competencies

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
<p>Introductory Questions</p> <p>The two questions below are very effective in opening the discussion and getting people to think about the main themes of the interview. They are a good ice breaker and focus people on thinking about their workers. This is where the themes of the experiences will emerge. Listen for the types of experiences people have had with other agencies, and consider whether they are relevant to your service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you please tell me about a worker you have had who really understood your cultural background? How did you know they were good? What did they do? • Can you tell me about a worker who didn't understand your cultural background? Have you ever had someone who wasn't a good worker? What was it like? <p>These first questions are open ended, so keep them flowing and ask a lot of follow-up questions.</p> <p>People will want to tell their stories here. The ones who dominate in the interview will start first. Keep in mind those who are quiet, to engage them later on.</p> <p>When someone says their worker was 'good' ask them how and what did they do. Try to find out what 'good' means to them.</p> <p>In organisations that have had no or few conversations about culture or have had conversations about culture having a particular meaning (e.g. ethnicity, disability) these questions may be used to explore the context of the organisation further (e.g. culture as ethnicity, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, gender, sexuality, age, disability).</p>			

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
<p>Emotions, including frustrations, may be obvious here. When people say their worker wasn't good, ask them to explain what no good was like and what they would have liked their worker to do instead.</p>			
<p>Self Awareness</p>	<p>How much do you think your worker knows and understands about your culture or religion?</p>	<p>This question tries to find out how important it is to consumers that workers know specific cultural information.</p>	<p>Some responses may include that the person doesn't care whether their worker knows a lot, that they just want the service; others will say that the worker should know more. Consider whether this question can be linked to the 'good' examples at the top.</p>
	<p>Do you feel your worker is influenced by their own culture or religion when talking with you? Is this a big influence?</p>	<p>This question tries to find out whether the services received are being affected by the worker's own beliefs and background. This can be a positive or negative result and is important to explore.</p>	<p>Again, some people may consider this irrelevant; others may talk about incidents where the worker's beliefs have been influential.</p> <p>Always ask how and what difference it made to the person and what they think would have happened if the worker had acted differently. This is an important distinction to make.</p> <p>'Yes, most of the time. But they shouldn't. It all depends on what they are talking about. If they are talking about your culture then they need to know what they are talking about'.</p>

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
Self Awareness (cont.)	Do you feel your worker understands how they come across when they talk about your culture or religion?	<p>This question reveals the importance of cultural knowledge – not just facts and figures but empathy and understanding.</p> <p>It is trying to get to the human connection that is made between worker and consumer and how important this is for consumers.</p>	<p>The responses can reveal the vulnerability that comes from needing assistance and how people appreciate their workers having just some understanding and knowledge of where the person comes from and what experiences they had.</p> <p>‘They have just information, no understanding. It is hard to know 36 countries in Europe but to know something would be helpful.’</p>
	If you had a worker from your own culture / religion would that be different for you? How?	This question aims to find out whether it is important to deal with someone from the same cultural background.	Most people will say that having the same language (if language is an issue) is helpful but that it isn’t always better. The results from testing this guide show that being culturally competent is seen as better than being from the same cultural background. The issue of privacy within the person’s community will also emerge.
	Is it easier to talk about something really hard or taboo to someone who is from your own cultural background or not?	This links closely to the question above and aims to draw out the privacy issues that may be identified above.	This is a chance to explore the privacy issues further. There may be strong emotions displayed about people feeling they cannot trust workers from their own community.

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
Self Awareness (cont.)	What qualities in workers make you feel more comfortable to talk about really hard or taboo issues?	This question aims to gather a list of qualities that are important in effective workers. The results of this question make great feedback to staff who may feel they can't be effective because they speak English only or they are not from a non-English speaking background (NESB).	The qualities listed are often general and not culturally specific – but may link to being a good communicator and culturally competent.
	Do you feel your worker is able to get to the real issues that affect you?	This question aims to get to the heart of whether workers are being effective in dealing with the person's issues and how much being culturally competent is part of that.	Expect responses that allude to being treated with personal attention rather than being just a number. It can bring up feelings of being disrespected. Ask follow-up questions such as how does that make you feel, etc.
	Does your worker work with your family to design solutions for you? Do you have examples of this?	This question aims to find out whether families are being included in support plans and whether the person with disability wants them to be.	It is really important to ask for examples as it opens up the responses and gives depth to the answers. As every family situation is different, examples will reveal whether working with families is desirable or not. 'It is up to me whether I want my family involved or not.'

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
Cultural Knowledge	Do you feel your worker takes the time to listen to you and how your cultural background affects you?	These questions relate to the cultural knowledge of the workers and whether they are actively seeking specific information from the consumers or not. They also establish whether people want to be asked about specific cultural information and whether that is important to them or not.	These questions speed up the pace of the interview. Answers are often yes or no and may link to the person's experience of the orientation process (if the service has one).
	Have you ever been asked questions about where you are from, what language you like to speak when using the service, what your religion is?		If the answer is yes, ask when – does this relate to the orientation process or not?
	Would you like to be asked these questions?		This question is very important. Try to explore the answers here if you can.
	Do you feel your worker knows a bit about your culture or religion? Do you have examples of this?		Getting examples is a good way to show how the worker's work is being seen by the consumers.

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
Linguistic Competence	Does someone in the organisation speak your language or do you feel OK about asking for an interpreter?	This question establishes the service's use of and access to interpreters but it is also about power relations in an organisation concerning language.	Again, this series of questions is quick and a good way to make up time taken for earlier questions. Be careful not to race through these as it will be harder to engage more conversation later on.
	Does your worker offer you the use of an interpreter? Does your worker know how to work with interpreters?	If people feel they can ask for an interpreter, this is a good sign that they feel respected and listened to.	Some people may not know that they can ask for an interpreter or feel shy about asking as they don't want to cause trouble. If this is the case explore with the person what might happen if they did ask.
	If you wanted information in your language would you ask your worker if they had any?	From this question we want to know whether people are being offered ongoing information and what the process is like for how to get it.	Again, any examples you can gather will help to explain how people feel about this issue.
	At the organisation, do they have information available in your language on the walls or as brochures in the office?	This is about 'physical' signs that a service is culturally competent.	Prompt people if necessary by saying, 'in the reception area? Coffee area?'

Organisational Competencies

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
<p>A transition statement is required here: for example, 'Now I'm going to ask questions about the organisation as a whole and not just about your worker'.</p>			
Cultural Competence Planning	<p>Have you ever been asked for your opinion or consulted on what you think the organisation should do?</p>	<p>This question is about how the service includes people from NESB in the planning process. It relates to the organisational culture and whether it is inclusive or not.</p>	<p>It is important to dig a little here; people can forget that they were invited to some events if they couldn't attend. Ask whether anyone else they know from the service has been asked for their opinion on issues: this might spark a memory of consultation.</p>
	<p>Have you ever been asked how you can bring other people from your cultural background to the organisation?</p>	<p>This follows on from above. It relates to formal and informal requests from the service.</p>	<p>People may not have been asked formally by the organisation but brought someone in anyhow. If this is the case, ask how that person was received and whether they felt welcome.</p>

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
Human Resource Development	Do you feel that the workers from your service come from all different cultures and backgrounds?	This question relates directly to the team of people the person interacts with. Their impression of the group is important for whether they get a sense that different cultures are valued.	Again, this question is descriptive and therefore quick to get through. If you are interviewing people from a service that you don't work in, make sure you have a general understanding of the service structure so you can use the job titles, i.e. case workers, carers, etc.
	Do you know where the organisation advertises for new workers?	This question is designed to find out whether people have an impression of how the staff are recruited.	This is a straightforward question, however prompting of answers such as 'local papers, internet, etc' might be useful.
Professional Development	Do you feel your workers talk about cultural issues with each other? Do you have any examples?	<p>This question tries to find out the consumer's views about how or whether their workers are being trained and supported in working with cultural issues.</p> <p>Positive responses may imply that NESB consumers perceive that culture is important to the organisation.</p>	<p>Although the responses will be determined by the knowledge the consumers have, we are more interested in their perception of what importance the organisation places on cultural competence.</p> <p>'Yes, they go consult with each other, without mentioning names or details.'</p>

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
	Do you know if your workers get training about cultural issues?		This will be a yes or no answer.
Community Partnerships and Governance	Do you feel that the organisation is open to new people, new cultures and new ideas?	This question is aimed at getting people to describe the organisational culture and whether it is conducive to being open and responsive to new people and ideas.	Responses vary; 'Yes, they take referrals from other services like Mental Health or any other organisations.'
	Are there opportunities to mix with people from different cultures?	In a multicultural service, this response may seem obvious, however in 'mainstream' services it is important to ask in order to find out what opportunities people are getting to mix with others.	Responses vary, but most people are interested in interacting with others who use the service. 'Once a year they could have a dinner for the parents...I know nothing of the (other) parents so it would be good to get to know the other cultures of the people who come here.'

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
Linguistic Competence	How do you know if it is OK to ask someone about things you don't understand?	This question is about the person's perception of how approachable workers are, e.g. to take the time to explain things. Often, for a range of reasons, people from NESB won't ask questions. It also relates to the power relationship between consumer and worker.	It is obvious which services are empowering their consumers to get information. This is a great indication of how comfortable consumers are in speaking up and asking for things.
	At your service are the staff, from the receptionist to the managers, friendly, approachable and respectful?	Again, this is about the organisational culture as a whole. Experiences of receptionists are very powerful in making people feel welcome or unwelcome.	This is a personal experience. If there is a negative response ask the person how many times it happened and whether it has been addressed by management. 'Yes, everyone is friendly and good communicators'.
	Do you know what happens at the organisation when someone who doesn't speak English rings up?	This question may be answered with 'I don't know', but if it can be answered by someone who doesn't need an interpreter it reveals a level of awareness of how the service deals with people from NESB.	If there are people in the group who are using interpreters, ask them this question specifically. 'I say Interpreter –please – and they understand'.

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
Service Development	Is your family involved in the service you get from this organisation?	This question is designed to pick up whether the family are actively involved in decision making, not whether they are involved by the worker. This is a good indicator of the type and level of family involvement consumers want.	Responses will vary. Most people with disability will say 'yes, if you want them to be'. Carers who have children with disability will talk about their partners and other children and how much or little they are involved.
Continuous Quality Improvement	Are your ideas and suggestions about the service picked up?	This question aims to find out whether the organisation listens continually to their clients.	Some people may talk about formal consultations they have been involved in, but steer the conversation away from formal consultations to everyday experiences at the service.
	If you could say one thing to workers in organisations working with people with a disability who come from a non-English speaking background, what would it be? (Go around the room to give everyone a chance to speak).	This is a great question to finish with as it really gets to the heart of what people want from their workers. It empowers people to speak up and really pass on their own message to workers.	Answers vary and people are quite often passionate. Keep it short and to the point to allow everyone a chance to speak. 'Don't look down on me.' 'Be tolerant, don't be judgemental or prejudiced about my culture, colour.' 'Learn to listen and make the time to learn and understand.'

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
Data Management	Do you believe your personal information is respected and kept confidential?	This question is about confidentiality and privacy.	This question will raise issues of confidentiality and will speed up the pace of the interview again.
Policy Development	Do you know if the organisation has any policies about how it protects your rights as a person from a non-English speaking background?	This question is designed to find out whether consumers are aware of any policies of the service related specifically to them.	Again, this will be a yes or no answer. People may talk about their orientation kits and policies being included in that.
	Do you feel that the clients here receive a good service? Do you have examples of this? What could be done better?	This question is designed to start wrapping up the interview. It is a broad based question that aims to get a general impression of the service.	Issues that are raised here, e.g. 'my son's carer doesn't spend enough time feeding him', are the main issue for people individually. It is the general impression they take away from the service. 'The invitations (to events) need to be translated because it is embarrassing to have to always ring up and ask what they are about.'

Cultural Competence Area	The Question	Why the question is being asked?	What we found out and what to look out for
<p>Post-Evaluation Questions</p> <p>The questions below can be asked in addition to the questions above, after a period of active improvement of the service's cultural competence. It is important to be clear about the period of time you are talking about so there is a clear amount of time for the person to compare the organisation before and since the actions to improve its cultural competence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you noticed any changes to the service since (date)? If yes, what have you noticed? • What has been the biggest improvement for you? • What other changes would you still like to see? <p>Finalising</p> <p>Final question to wrap up the interview.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any other comments? <p>After everyone has spoken, thank the group for their thoughts and contributions. The answers often get personal so tell people that you appreciate their contributions and explain what you will be doing with the information they gave you during the interview.</p>			

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Appendix MDAA Factsheets No. 6 and No. 16

Factsheet No. 6

Cultural Competence Checklist for Agencies



Below is a cultural competence self-assessment checklist. Please fill out as directed. Not only does this checklist give you some indication about your agency's practices, it also gives you some ideas about how to make your agency more culturally competent.

Directions: Please read each statement and write in each box with a number from 1-3 which most closely reflects your agency's practices:

1 = We frequently do this 2 = We occasionally do this 3 = We rarely or never do this

Inside the Agency

- The agency regularly evaluates the ethnic mix of its 'service users' against the ethnic mix of the target population.
- The agency's mission statement, policies and procedures, etc. are regularly reviewed to ensure that they incorporate principles and practices that promote cultural diversity and cultural competence.
- The agency has a dedicated interpreter and translating budget line.
- The agency has trained all staff in the use of Telephone Interpreter Service.
- The agency sends staff to regular training to enhance their cultural competence.
- The agency has established an account with the Telephone Interpreter Service.
- The agency has planning processes which include action to enhance the cultural competence of the agency.
- The agency has established performance targets to achieve service utilization rates which complement the cultural mix of its target population. In line with these performance targets the agency has a process for prioritising potential service users from a non-English speaking background.
- The agency collects data in relation to service user's cultural, linguistic and religious background and needs, and where appropriate the backgrounds of family members.
- The agency actively discourages staff, service users and others from using racial and ethnic slurs by helping them understand the impact their language can have on others.
- The agency has employment practices which encourage the employment of people from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- The agency includes 'demonstrated knowledge and experience in cross-cultural issues' as a criterion in job advertisements.
- The agency has clearly outlined policies and procedures for the use of interpreters and translators.
- The agency encourages people from non-English speaking background to participate in the agency's governing body.
- The agency has in place processes which identify cultural, linguistic or religious needs at the point of intake or initial assessment.

Resources, Outreach and Promotions

- The agency has a resource library that includes information and resources about cultural diversity and disability issues.
- All over the office space there are posters, pictures and other materials that reflect the cultural diversity of the communities the agency serves.
- The agency has available printed information in languages other than English.
- When reprinting information the agency uses images that are culturally diverse and culturally appropriate.
- In the reception area the agency displays a large interpreter sign that can be used by people to indicate their preferred language of choice.
- The agency promotes its services to people from a non-English speaking background.
- The agency liaises with ethnic community agencies in the target area.
- The agency has in place mechanisms for consultations with service users from non-English speaking background and the ethnic communities in the target areas.
- The agency has on display general information pamphlets in a variety of languages.
- The agency uses culturally appropriate strategies when outreaching to ethnic communities.
- The agency develops links with ethnic communities and uses workers in those communities as cultural consultants when needed.

If you frequently responded '1', your agency is engaged in practices that recognise and promote cultural diversity and aims to deliver a culturally competent service to people with disability.

If you frequently responded '2' or '3' your agency needs to change its practices to respond more effectively and efficiently to the needs of the culturally diverse community.

For all the questions where you responded with '2' or '3' consider how you can change your agency's practices to be more culturally competent.

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MDAA gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance provided by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

Factsheet No. 16
Who lives in our community?
Identifying community diversity



How:	Consider collecting the following information:	Resources to help you:
<p>Compile a service user profile</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country of birth • cultural and religious background/ancestry • languages spoken at home • level of English language proficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users and family members
<p>Use demographics to identify which NESB communities live in your area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top 5-10 birthplaces • What are the emerging communities? • The main languages spoken in LGA • Population characteristics of main and emerging communities, e.g. age, sex, education level, etc • Level of English language proficiency • Any characteristics of the LGA that may impact on these communities, e.g. transport, housing • Have there been any significant changes since the last ABS census? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local councils' Social and Community Plans and/or Community Profiles (check relevant council's website or contact relevant council's social planning or community development section to obtain a copy). • Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2001 Census data: http://www.abs.gov.au • Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW (CRC): http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au to purchase a copy of: The People of NSW. This useful resource provides demographic data from the 2001 ABS Census for all NSW local government areas. • Very limited data is available about people from a NESB with disability who live in NSW. MDAA's website provides estimations for each NSW local government area. Population figures are based on information gathered in the 2001 census: http://www.mdaa.org.au/publications/faqs/ssd.html
<p>Undertake a needs assessment of your local community or use needs assessments done by other organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key issues/needs affecting the communities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawe, P. Degeling, D. & Hall, J., (1990) Evaluating Health Promotion: A Health Workers Guide, MacLennan and Petty Publishers, Sydney. • Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care (DADHC) regional planning reports (contact the DADHC regional planner for your region. • Local councils' Social and Community

How:	Consider collecting the following information:	Resources to help you:
		<p>Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Health and Area Health Service data • Other government and non-government organisations in your catchment area
<p>Find out who else is providing services in your area and to whom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which groups, organisations, exist for people in the area? e.g. support groups, social clubs, welfare organisations • What services and resources exist in the community? e.g. does the community have funded welfare and community workers? Other active social or religious groups? How well do mainstream services meet the needs of the community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet • Local directories available from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☞ Local libraries ☞ Local councils ☞ Migrant Resource Centres ☞ Other organisations ☞ Ethnic Communities Council (Ethnic Communities Reference Book 2005; Multicultural Interagency Directory 2006)
<p>Compare demographic profile and other data collected to service user profile and use this information in planning and targeting your services and programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How reflective of the demographics of your catchment area is your service user profile? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factsheet 17: Networking with NESB Communities provides a useful guide

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