



MIGRANT AND REFUGEE MENTAL HEALTH

Culture and mental health

- The diversity of cultures, religious beliefs and languages spoken amongst Western Australians continues to increase.
- The processes of resettlement which migrants and refugees undergo can place their mental health at risk. Grief, loss and continuing anxiety over family and friends left behind can make it difficult to establish a new life.
- Other barriers to overcome may include:
 - loss of family and social supports, particularly for women after childbirth
 - unemployment, lack of recognition of professional qualifications and a drop in socioeconomic status
 - language barriers
 - isolation from others of a similar cultural background
 - experiences of trauma before and after settlement.
- Adapting to a new culture can be a hurdle which impacts on mental health. Grief can relate to loss of values that were the norm in the culture of origin but not highly regarded in Australia.
- Some refugees witnessed and/or have experienced trauma, some had no choice but to flee their beloved country resulting in a longer recovery period on the loss of '*what was*' and what '*life could have been*'. Too often, time to deal with grief is put aside as the needs of daily living take priority.

Culturally responsive services

- Migrants and refugees have the right to culturally appropriate and responsive services. This means the health professional or service provider helps people by:
 - respecting everyone's culture and beliefs
 - being open-minded
 - being up-front about things they don't know and asking questions about a person's culture and beliefs
 - developing shared expectations
 - allowing more time to support people when using interpreters
 - being flexible with appointment times
 - working with communities to increase mental health literacy and address stigma.

Further information

- **ASeTTS** is a non-government organisation providing treatment and support to people who have been tortured or traumatised by violent conflicts.

Website: www.asetts.org.au

- **Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre (EDAC)** is a non-government organisation which provides information, advocacy and support to CALD people with a mental illness and their families. They host a multicultural carers' group, have a weekly radio program and provide training to agencies

Website: www.edac.org.au



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- **Multicultural Mental Health Australia** has translated fact sheets, books and resources.
Website: www.mmha.org.au
- **NSW Multicultural Health** has translated fact sheets on mental health and illness.
Website: www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au/mhcs/topics/Mental_Health_Illness.html
- **Office of Multicultural Interests** has fact sheets on cultural diversity and religion in WA and policies on using interpreters.
Website: www.omi.wa.gov.au
- **Transcultural Mental Health Centre** has translated information on mental health.
Website: www.dhi.gov.au/tmhc/resources/translations.htm
- **Victoria's Health Translations Directory** contains resources in different languages.
Website: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcsite.nsf/pages/ht?opendocument
- **WA Mental Health** is the one-stop-shop for mental health information in WA.
Website: www.health.wa.gov.au/mentalhealth

For health professionals and services

- **WA Transcultural Mental Health Centre** offers the following training and resources:
 - Cultural Competency in Clinical Practice, a cultural awareness training program
 - The Compendium of Assessment Tools for Mental Health Clients from CALD Backgrounds
 - Cultural Competency Standards and Self-Assessment Audit Tool
 - Directory of Bilingual/Bicultural Mental Health Practitioners
 Phone: 9224 1760
 Website: www.mmha.org.au/watmhc
- **WA Perinatal Mental Health Unit** offers the following resources:
 - State Perinatal Mental Health Reference Group (2006) *Using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS): Translated into languages other than English*. Perth: Department of Health.
 - State Perinatal Mental Health Reference Group (2007) *You Are Not Alone: Emotional Health for Mothers [DVD]*. Perth: Department of Health. This DVD has been developed for the Iraqi, Ethiopian and Sudanese communities and is presented in the Arabic, Ahmaric and Dinka languages.

The DVDs are free within WA and cost \$25 each for interstate organisations. All three DVDs can be viewed in full at

www.yourzone.com.au/CONTENT/MediaZone/perinatal_health

Phone: 9340 1795

