Fact sheet: Mental health services for people of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds

- People from a CALD background have a significantly lower level of access to mental health care and support in the wider community.
- This results in much greater responsibility being placed on family members without adequate support or education.
- The government funds a range of mental health services and programmes for people from CALD backgrounds.

Mental Health in Multicultural Australia project

- The Mental Health in Multicultural Australia (MHiMA) project is funded by the Department of Health to provide a national focus for advice and support to providers and governments on mental health and suicide prevention for people from CALD backgrounds.
- The aim of this project is to promote better mental health and wellbeing and to improve awareness of suicide prevention in CALD communities.
- The project is delivered by a consortium comprised of the Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre (QTMHC); the Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit (VTPU); the Centre for International Mental Health (CIMH) at Melbourne University; and the Mental Health Substance Abuse Research Group, Human Rights and Security Cluster (UniSA).
- MHiMA's focus is on building networks and collaborative partnerships, assisting to build the capacity of Australia’s culturally and linguistically diverse communities and making strategic policy contributions to national, state and territory governments.

Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS)

- The Department of Health funds Medicare Locals under the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) programme to allow GPs to refer patients who have been diagnosed as having a mental disorder of mild to moderate severity to mental health professionals to provide short term focused psychological strategies services.
- ATAPS primarily treats people with common mental disorders such as anxiety and depression.
- All ATAPS services are targeted to give priority to population groups which have particular difficulty in accessing mental health treatment in the primary care sector, including people from CALD communities, who are a target group under the programme.
- Under ATAPS there is support for service delivery costs associated with clinical services to referred mental health clients. These may include the use of interpreter services.
- A series of GP Mental Health Care Medicare items complement ATAPS and provide a structured framework for GPs to undertake early intervention, assessment and management of patients with mental disorders, as well as providing referral pathways to allied mental health service providers.
Programme of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (PASTT)

• The Department of Health provides funding to PASTT service providers to deliver mental health and other support to permanently resettled humanitarian entrants and those on temporary visa products living in the community who are experiencing psychological and/or psychosocial difficulties resulting from their pre-migration experiences of torture and trauma.

• PASTT services include:
  • Direct counselling and related support services, including advocacy and referrals to mainstream health and related services to individuals, families and groups who have experienced torture and trauma;
  • Education and training to mainstream health and related service providers;
  • Provision of resources to support and enhance the capacity of specialist counselling and related support services to deliver effective services and to respond to emerging client needs;
  • Community development and capacity building activities to emerging community groups; and
  • Outreach services to rural, regional and remote areas.

• Agencies delivering PASTT services are all members of a network of specialist rehabilitation agencies that work with survivors of torture and trauma, known as the Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT). There is a FASSTT member agency in each state and territory in Australia.

• Clients can be referred through a wide range of sources including Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) administered by the Department of Social Services (DSS), other settlement services, general practitioners and other health services, education providers, legal services, community services, family, friends, community members and through self-referral.

Suicide prevention

• The Department of Health funds a number of projects under the National Suicide Prevention Programme (NSPP) which include a focus on CALD communities. These include:
  • The Queensland Programme of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma NEXUS project, which aims to improve community awareness to better identify and help young people at risk of suicide and increase the number and quality of connections of young people from refugee backgrounds.
  • The Wesley Mission Brisbane Expanded Horizons project, which aims to build individual resilience, support networks and educational engagement in the target groups and raise awareness, acceptance and tolerance in the community and schools.
  • The Migrant Resource Centre’s Phoenix Centre Suicide Prevention project which aims to build partnerships with and support for key organisations that provide services to CALD groups including planning and training regarding those at risk of suicide.
- The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia **Community Broadcasting Suicide Prevention project**, which aims to deliver help-seeking and wellbeing messages to a wide and diverse network of communities nationally, including Indigenous communities, rural and remote, and CALD through satellite and local radio providing 24 hour a day national delivery of suicide and mental health and wellbeing messages.

- Griffith University's **WHO Start project** which seeks to investigate preventative interventions across various countries, cultures and population sub-groups within the Asia-Pacific region.

**Support for Day to Day Living in the Community**

- The Support for Day to Day Living in the Community programme (D2DL) is a structured activity programme which aims to improve the quality of life for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, including individuals from CALD communities.

- This programme seeks to increase the ability of clients to participate in social, recreational and educational activities with the aim of living with an optimal level of independence in the community.

- 38 organisations around Australia are funded to provide D2DL services at 60 sites to approximately 14,650 people including difficult to reach groups such as people from CALD communities.

**Establishment of a national mental health online portal**

- Funding was provided in 2011-12 to help establish a single mental health online portal to enable consumers to more easily identify and access trusted and evidence based services.

- The mental health online portal mindhealthconnect was launched on 5 July 2012 and should benefit CALD communities given there is often a preference to remain anonymous, due to stigma or difficulties using face-to-face services.

**Department of Social Services (DSS) measures**

**Targeted Community Care (Mental Health) Programme**

Information on the [Targeted Community Care (Mental Health) Programme](#) is available on the Department of Social Services website.

**Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs)**

Information on [Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs)](#) is available on the Department of Social Services website.

**Family Mental Health Support Service (FMHSS)**

Information on [Family Mental Health Support Service (FMHSS)](#) is available on the Department of Social Services website.
Mental Health Respite: Carer Support (MHR:CS)

Information on Mental Health Respite: Carer Support (MHR:CS) is available on the Department of Social Services website.

Further information

For more information please visit the mental health website.

For information relating to Department of Social Services programmes, please visit the DSS website.