

How to:

## A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CALD CONSUMER PARTICIPATION

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) consumer participation encompasses a vast array of different strategies which can be used to engage CALD consumers in the planning, implementation and evaluation of health programs, projects and services. The most effective participation approach will involve a range of different strategies with different purposes and different outcomes which can contribute to a variety of aspects of an organisation. The more that CALD consumers are able to participate in diverse ways, the more likely an organisation is to be responsive to their needs. Below are a number of examples of different strategies that might be employed with some suggestions about how to make them successful.

### CALD Consumers on Boards of Management

<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisations seek representation on Boards of Management that is reflective of CALD communities within their catchment</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input is at the top level of decision making</li> <li>Opportunities for skill enhancement and social participation for consumer representatives</li> <li>Consumer can provide input on particular cultural sensitivities in program/service planning</li> </ul>
<b>Issues to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer can't represent all ethnic communities in the catchment</li> <li>Consumer can't be the 'cultural expert' for their community or other ethnic communities</li> </ul>
<b>Actions for success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with the community to select the most appropriate representative from that community</li> <li>Have a commitment to training, supporting and mentoring the consumer about the health sector and meeting processes</li> <li>Meet the language needs of the consumer</li> </ul>

### Consumer Planning Days

<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An issue relevant to a particular CALD community is identified and presented to that community to make decisions which are incorporated into planning processes</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community is given ownership to plan for a particular issue, which will encourage cultural appropriateness, especially if they are also involved at the needs identification stage</li> <li>Community will have closer involvement with mainstream services, therefore greater awareness of services available</li> <li>Agency has greater links with community which may also help to address access issues</li> </ul>
<b>Issues to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community may not be involved in needs identification, problem definition, implementation or evaluation</li> <li>Community may have lack of knowledge of planning and systemic parameters</li> </ul>
<b>Actions for success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a clear rationale for the issue</li> <li>Use interpreters and translated materials</li> <li>Work from a community based venue and facilitate the days through community representatives and organisations</li> <li>Develop content and procedures for Planning Days based on community input to ensure cultural appropriateness</li> <li>Be flexible and allow time for information and issues to be fully considered by community</li> </ul>

**Consumers on Project Reference and Steering Groups**

<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing participation by CALD community members in planning processes and contribution to implementation and evaluation is sought by organisation</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing engagement and commitment to CALD issues</li> <li>If communities are aware of representation by their own community members they may be more likely to use the services/programs</li> <li>Valuable participation in steering groups may encourage higher levels of participation in the future</li> </ul>
<b>Issues to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal meeting structures may be unfamiliar and intimidating</li> <li>Difficulty of recruiting representatives for ongoing time commitment</li> <li>Whether the issue being discussed is one that affects the community in question</li> </ul>
<b>Actions for success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using ethno-specific agencies as a contact point for recruiting consumer representatives</li> <li>Reimbursement for attendance</li> <li>Finding a consumer who has good links with their community</li> <li>Support and mentoring in committee structures</li> <li>Ensure that project aims have a clear benefit for the community</li> </ul>

**Consumer Advisory Groups**

<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CALD consumers are engaged to provide input to groups that are separate from Boards of Management to elicit responses to particular questions</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to engage with and target particular communities on particular issues</li> <li>Allows for dialogue between consumers of different ethnic backgrounds</li> <li>Facilitators can experience a variety of views within a particular community</li> </ul>
<b>Issues to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumers not necessarily learning a lot about health services</li> <li>Benefits are skewed towards agencies</li> <li>As consumers are not involved in decision making, programs may not end up being culturally sensitive</li> </ul>
<b>Actions for success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select representatives that have knowledge, experience and interest in the issues</li> <li>Use interpreters when required</li> <li>Pilot test questions to ensure cultural appropriateness and relevance</li> <li>Brief other consumers in the group on how to work with interpreters</li> </ul>

**Focus Groups**

<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An organised discussion where CALD consumers are invited to share their views and experiences on a particular topic</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows for specific cultural and linguistic requirements to be met</li> <li>Can provide an opportunity to target smaller or marginalised communities or sub-groups</li> <li>Can discuss a topic that is sensitive in depth and explore cultural understandings</li> </ul>
<b>Issues to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group may need to be briefed on how to work with interpreters in a group setting</li> <li>Focus group format may not be a culturally appropriate method of consultation</li> </ul>
<b>Actions for success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reimbursement for attendance and other supports such as childcare</li> <li>Hold more than one group to cater for different age, gender, language and ethnicity mixes</li> <li>Liaise with specialist services to ensure that subjects for discussion are culturally appropriate</li> <li>Ensure findings and actions are fed back to focus group participants</li> </ul>

**Information Sessions and Printed Materials**

<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sessions are held to provide information to CALD communities about relevant health issues and services and associated printed materials are also distributed</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can reach a large number of people in a small amount of time</li> <li>Community leaders can 'spread the word' through distributing printed materials</li> </ul>
<b>Issues to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumers are not involved in the development of the information</li> <li>Some information may be irrelevant to a particular community</li> <li>Information or education sessions may not be a familiar mode of learning</li> <li>There may be literacy issues</li> </ul>
<b>Actions for success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide sessions and materials in relevant community languages</li> <li>Do not use straight translations and utilise culturally appropriate visual diagrams</li> <li>Pilot test all materials prior to use</li> <li>Use culturally appropriate venues and disseminate and promote through community representatives</li> <li>Consider different modes of delivery such as peer educators or 'experts' where communities have different expectations of the education process</li> </ul>