



PLACING THE CLIENT AT THE CENTRE

"By being person-centred, you tick the diversity box. Because what we learn is that really, we are all diverse. Take people with Australian background, they will all be different, they will have different interests... just because someone speaks a different language doesn't mean they don't want the same thing."
 - SSG Coordinator

Person-centred Care

The principles of person-centred care were repeatedly referenced during this consultation. As outlined in the Active Service Model in Victoria, they include:

- people's needs should be viewed holistically
- services should be organised around the person and their carer - that is, the person should not be simply slotted into existing services

Nationally, the Commonwealth Home Support Programme's (CHSP) service delivery principles outlined in the CHSP 2015 Manual state that when developing, delivering or evaluating services, providers need to:

- Promote each client's opportunity to maximise their capacity and quality of life through:
 - being client-centred and providing opportunities for each client to be actively involved in addressing their goals
 - focusing on retaining or regaining each client's functional and psychosocial independence
 - building on the strengths, capacity and goals of individuals
- Provide services tailored to the unique circumstances and cultural preference of each client, their family and carers.

The model of service delivery of the CHSP is described as 'empowering individuals to take charge of, and participate in, informed decision-making about the care and services they receive'.

The key to a person-centred approach is that it requires flexibility, so that the service fits the participant, rather than the participant needing to fit in the service. This however can be perceived as difficult when working with older people who may have experienced a change in their capacity or present with physical and psychological needs. It may be met with resistance from staff who are used to working differently (see Help Sheet #6 'Engaging Staff and Volunteers' and Discussion Topic 4 Putting the person at the centre of their own care from the Connecting the Pieces resource).

According to a SSG Coordinator, *'being person-centred is not just a philosophy, it's a practice, it's about how you carry yourself every day.'*

Language and culture

Access & Support Workers interviewed for this consultation highly valued a system that enabled them to work with a client's identified needs:

"We build rapport with the client and their carer' said one 'They trust us, we can then talk to the provider to express their needs'.

A service centred on the person allows for the layers and complexities of culture to be understood and for the most suitable SSG to be found. Workers recommended visiting a group with a client as a first step, and encouraging the client to 'show persistence and curiosity'. A person may need to visit several groups before they find one they like. Their advice to services was to pay attention to the newcomer and make an effort to make them feel welcome, for instance by teaching other participants a few words in the

language of the new person, or by putting up signs and photos that illustrate their culture. Whilst simple, this shows a willingness to engage with people from another language group and culture.

We are all diverse

It should not be assumed that a person from a certain CALD background will want to attend a group of the same background. For instance, they may have lived outside their CALD community for years, or may fear discrimination on the basis of gender or religion (such as an atheist is a cultural community where religion is central to people's cultural identity). Or they may identify as Australian rather than the nationality of their country of origin. It is important to understand a person's interests and hobbies, or personality traits, and to match them to a group on that basis. See the [Connecting the Pieces Video](#) and [Diversity Jigsaw](#).

This is worth keeping in mind if you are planning to match a new client with a 'buddy' to support their introduction to the group (see Help Sheet #7 'Joining a Group'). Based on the information provided through the client's assessment, the 'matching' can be made on the basis of affinities and personalities as well as language and culture.

"Language is just a tool that gets what you want, it is not who you are."

- SSG Coordinator.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- CHSP manual: <https://agedcare.govcms.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care-publications-and-articles-fact-sheets/commonwealth-home-support-programme-programme-manual-2015>
- Active Service Model, health.vic: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/home-and-community-care/hacc-program-for-younger-people/hacc-program-guidelines/hacc-quality-and-service-development/active-service-model>
- Connecting the Pieces – video and reflective resource explaining how diversity, person-centre care and the relationship between them. <http://www.emralliance.org/connecting-the-pieces.html>
- The EMR Alliance youtube channel is a collection of videos covering diversity, person-centred care and wellness-related topics: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNjNartUMt2N3odUaDBW6rA>
- Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria aged care resources and projects: <http://www.eccv.org.au/aged-care/>
- Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA), 2015, Review of Australian Research on Older People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds, available on http://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/AgedCareReport_FECCA.pdf
- Supporting older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Research to Practice Briefing 4, Benevolent Society, November 2010 - <https://www.benevolent.org.au/think/practice--resources?q=Culturally%20and%20linguistically&topic>
- Carers Australia (resources for CALD carers): <http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/about-carers/culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-carers/resources-for-cald-carers/>
- Commonwealth Home Support Programme Good Practice Guide <https://agedcare.health.gov.au/programs-services/commonwealth-home-support-programme/living-well-at-home-chsp-good-practice-guide>

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