



PARTNERSHIPS

'Working in partnerships enables partners to learn from each other about the nature of the issue, their potential role in relation to the issue and consider creative solutions to address the issue.'

- Practising Positive Partnerships in the Ethnic and Multicultural Community. (See Recommended Resources.)

Partnerships can lead to the strengthening and empowerment of communities.

For Social Support Groups, partnerships are essential in order to:

- engage CALD communities
- develop knowledge of particular groups
- strengthen referral pathways into Social Support Groups
- maximise available resources.

The more communities see you as a welcoming service, respectful of the needs of their members, the more positive the word-of-mouth will be about your services. This will support the popularity of SSGs and ultimately the likelihood of referrals under the client-driven system.

Trust is essential to the establishment of a strong partnership; for some ethnic communities, their experience of working with mainstream services may have been one-sided and left them feeling that their knowledge and time were used without much return. Ethno-specific organisations are often led and staffed by volunteers who may already feel stretched by the demand of their community. One of the key themes identified in the Practising Positive Partnerships research relates to organisational capacity, and in particular how limited resources hinder an organisation's capacity to

form and sustain partnerships. It is important to keep this in mind when approaching groups or individuals, but also when looking at your own organisation's capacity.

Reciprocity is therefore important: how can you support ethno-specific organisations? What are you offering their members? If the partnership is solely about increasing the number of referrals, CALD community groups may question the benefits of the relationship. The 'partnership checklist' developed by VicHealth can help you determine whether a partnership is based on genuine collaboration.

Tips

- Get to know the local community in all its diversity
- Develop a relationship with your local Migrant Resource Centre as they are a wealth of knowledge about CALD communities in your area.
- Look outside ethno-specific organisations to include churches and faith groups, clubs, organisers of community events, places where people play cards or board games, etc.
- Access & Support Workers are very knowledgeable and 'have their fingers on the community pulse'. Do not hesitate to ask them for advice on what organisations

to approach and the needs of the local CALD residents.

- Promote your SSG with CALD Senior Citizen Groups. As well as explaining what your SSG offers, ask them what activities they are interested in that they cannot deliver themselves, and see whether it is possible for your SSG to run them.
- Ask yourself what organisations you may want to partner with to recruit volunteers, access activities, attend events, and generally tap into existing resources. For instance, Volunteer Resource Centres can help you find CALD volunteers, and Neighbourhood Houses may run free or low-cost activities of interest to your group.

Who needs to be involved?

- Your organisation, as you will be representing it in your interactions with local community groups.
- Access & Support Workers, who can share their knowledge about local groups and communities' needs
- Existing SSG participants of CALD backgrounds, who can also share knowledge and advice on relevant contacts
- Volunteers of CALD backgrounds, for the same reasons.



Case study - Manningham Men's Shed

The Manningham Men's Shed recently embarked on a small project: to offer an 8-week experience to a local Chinese group, introducing them to the shed's resources. After the 8-week program, four of the Chinese men stayed; an asylum seeker from Malaysia also recently joined the group.

'English can be minimal' explains Men's Shed Coordinator Peter, 'but all like the blokey, sort of 'sheddy' environment.'

Initial reluctance from some of the Men's Shed members, struggling to adjust to the growing Chinese presence in the eastern suburbs, quickly dissipated. According to the Men's Shed Coordinator, meeting men from the Chinese community 'definitely changed the dynamic. Now people help each other out, the more able help the less able. And we're learning Chinese as well!'

This partnership provided quantitative and qualitative benefits for all: new members and better inter-racial relationships with local residents. The Men's Shed has also formed a partnership with the local secondary school, which has a number of bi-cultural and bi-lingual students.

Case Study 2 - Salaginto and the Filipino Seniors

Twelve years ago, the Migrant Information Centre (MIC) approached Uniting Care with a request: a group of Filipino Seniors, calling themselves Salaginto ('Beetle') were looking for somewhere to meet and enjoy activities and outings. Subsequently, Uniting Care East Burwood formed a partnership with the MIC and the Filipino group to meet fortnightly at the East Burwood Centre and to integrate with existing groups and clients. Transport was originally provided through MIC funding, and then, when this ran out, through Uniting Care's HACC funds.

The connection between Salaginto and the Uniting Care Positive Living Groups was obvious straight away: a common interest in dance with the groups' coordinator led to Salaginto, the centre coordinator and other groups' participants performing at the centre's Christmas parties and other significant event days. Almost all Salaginto members are highly educated in the fields of Science and Engineering and are always interested in having guest speakers and information sessions. They love to share their culture with other groups and their enthusiasm and energy has been infectious across the centre's groups and activities.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- Monash University Healthy Ageing Research Unit (2010), Practising Positive Partnerships in the Ethnic and Multicultural Community: [http://eccv.org.au/library/file/projects/PPP_Full_Report_12-07-10_Final_\(5\)_with_cover.pdf](http://eccv.org.au/library/file/projects/PPP_Full_Report_12-07-10_Final_(5)_with_cover.pdf)
- VicHealth Partnership Analysis Tool: <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/the-partnerships-analysis-tool>
- Migrant Information Centre (East Melbourne) provides a range of services for migrants and refugees living in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. This includes information on the demographics of the Easter Region: <http://miceastmelb.com.au/resources/demographics-of-the-eastern-region/>
- Victorian government data analysis, based on the census: <http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/population-and-migration/victorias-diversity/population-diversity-in-local-councils>
- Pathway of the Innovative Multicultural PAG partnership in Brimbank <https://www.ahaconsulting.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Multicultural-Planned-Activity-Group.pdf>

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