



# Engaging with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities through PEER EDUCATION Aditi Sharma<sup>1</sup>

The Multicultural Health and Support Service (MHSS), a program of the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH) works with migrant, refugee asylum seeker and international student communities to achieve better health outcomes in relation to culturally sensitive issues regarding blood-borne viruses (BBV), sexually transmissible infections (STI), sexual health and healthy relationships.

<sup>1</sup>Multicultural Health Support Service (MHSS) and Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH)



## Through the Peer Education Process

Peer education is a form of informal education where peers learn from peers and is a widely recognised and used form of health promotion around the world. MHSS has designed and implemented Peer education project in 2011 and has since been using this strategy.

This process aims to:

- Strengthen communities' capacity to address their health and social support needs
- Provide skills and knowledge to peer educators and participants to enable them to reduce BBV/STI vulnerability at an individual level and within their friendship, family and community networks
- Expand/increase MHSS's reach and connectedness within the target communities

## A framework to capture and use shared knowledge

The Peer education program has been evaluated using the What Works and Why (W3) Framework, courtesy of Latrobe University. The W3 framework is an evaluation and monitoring framework developed by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society - Latrobe University. The framework supports peer-based programs to capture and use peer knowledge.



*Thank you so much for delivering the session. The group found it extremely useful and easy to understand as it was delivered by someone from their own community in their own language.*

## Building strong, sustainable community connections

In 2020-21 MHSS program trained six peer educators. Six trained peer educators were involved in the delivery of 16 community education sessions online in English and in community languages to 252 community members in the Indian community who lived in the north western Melbourne and metro region.

The peer education model was modified to an online project due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A key success of the project was its community connections and how these facilitated word of mouth referrals from within communities

Additionally, the experience gained in this project enabled the peer educators to secure work in other relevant projects.



### More information:

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