



Signposts

for building better behaviour

Working with Participants from

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

Facilitator notes

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About working with families from CALD communities

Approach

These supplementary materials facilitate access to the major principles and key concepts of the Signposts program for families from a range of communities.

This supplement alerts facilitators to areas of the program that may be difficult or confronting to participants from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and provides suggestions and resources that will enable facilitators to offer the program in a culturally sensitive manner.

Culturally sensitive interactions and targeted discussion while implementing the Signposts program also provides opportunities to increase participants’ awareness of Anglo-Australian practices for managing children’s behaviour.

For many families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Signposts may appear inconsistent with their cultural mores and value systems. Much of the program reflects Anglo-Australian concepts which may contradict attitudes held in other cultures.

It is essential, however, that facilitators recognise and be aware of the risks of making generalisations. All people live in a global society and this impacts on a person’s culture.

Within each culture, there are sub-cultures and each may interpret the Australian ways of raising children and existing family models differently. Each family, and the individuals within a family, are unique. Because of this, they will view what facilitators are explaining in different ways and with different emphases.

It is therefore not possible to be prescriptive about how the program should be delivered to each cultural group. Gathering information prior to and during the program through discussion and close observation of participants' responses to the sessions will assist you to determine what they are most comfortable with regarding communication and socialisation practices.

To assist we have provided:

- » notes for each Signposts module alerting you where language and strategies may need to be reconsidered in light of cultural issues, and providing some suggestions for alternatives
- » a Cultural Competence checklist which identifies areas that facilitators may need to address before and during the implementation of Signposts
- » websites which provide cultural information and others which provide translated information.

Facilitators

Trained bilingual facilitators would be ideally placed to provide the Signposts program for parents from cultures with which they are familiar. The majority of trained facilitators are most familiar with Anglo-Australian traditions, and are not proficient in a second language.

To maximise the effectiveness of delivery to participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, facilitators may need to consider:

- » attending cultural sensitivity training
- » seeking advice from an ethno-specific or multicultural support agency before delivering the program or in relation to specific modules
- » referring to the Cultural Competence checklist to assist in preparation and delivery of sessions
- » delivering sessions with one or more interpreters
- » delivering sessions with an ethno-specific co-facilitator.

Interpreters

For many participants it will be important to work with interpreters; however, information provided by them to participants will be influenced by the interpreters' understanding and interpretation of the concepts in the program. Use of family members as interpreters is not recommended.

Booking the same interpreter/s for the whole program, and spending time briefing them before the program or between sessions, and checking for their understanding of the key concepts would be ideal. To assist with this we have provided:

- » a brief summary of each module (parent summary sheet) which covers the key concepts
- » a glossary of terms and concepts for quick reference by interpreters, co-facilitators and participants as part of the parent resources.

For more information on how to work well with interpreters, visit the Signposts website section on Facilitators.

Participants

Participants may be anxious about what will happen to any information they give you either verbally or in writing. Clear descriptions of what information you will ask of them (e.g. contact details, program evaluation questionnaires) and what you will do with this information are important, as is emphasising the confidentiality (including your mandatory reporting requirements) of group discussions.

Participants may wish to know the identity of interpreters, as some groups or individuals may not wish to discuss personal issues using

particular individual interpreters or those from particular sections of the community.

Each participant's current mastery of English will impact on how they understand key elements of Signposts, both those presented aurally as well as those presented in writing.

At present, all written materials are in English, with a reading level approximately equivalent to year 7.

To assist with teaching the key concepts, written information may be supported by:

- » 1:1 assistance
- » joint discussion of workbook exercises rather than individuals working on them alone
- » reducing the number of written exercises
- » use of summary sheets
- » systematic use of interpreters
- » visual/pictorial aids (not included).

Facilitator resources

- » Cultural Competence checklist
- » For each module:
 - » Alerts, comments and recommendations to be used in addition to the Signposts Facilitators Manual.
 - » Summaries to assist participants and interpreters absorb the critical teaching points.

Introduction

Parent resources

- » Summary sheets
- » Glossary of terms and concepts

Before you start

As with any work with families, consider the characteristics and particular issues which may be relevant to the parents/carers participating in the program.

Booking of interpreters, briefing of interpreters or co-facilitators, translation of invitations or other materials may extend your preparation time.

You may need to consider issues such as the gender of participants and of facilitators, and details such as the nature of any food requirements, such as halal or kosher, if providing refreshments.

Read the Resources section, particularly the key references:

- » Cultural Competence checklist (see Facilitator Resources)
- » Southside Community Services website cultural dictionary http://www.sscs.org.au/uploaded_files/fck/cultural_dictionary.pdf (1.31 MB pdf)
- » Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS): Early Childhood Research Institute <http://clas.uiuc.edu/techreport/tech14.html>

Difficult behaviour and intellectual disability

Some cultural groups will have concerns surrounding the concept of disability. This may be related to previous experiences where disability has been associated with:

- » feelings of guilt
- » belief that children with disabilities are special and they have been especially chosen
- » non-acceptance/denial that the child has a disability
- » beliefs that children with disabilities are ill
- » beliefs that children with disabilities cannot learn or achieve.

The term disability can be offensive or not familiar in some cultures. The child may not have received a diagnosis of developmental delay or intellectual disability. The family may not accept the use of this term, or may not have an understanding of the implications of any diagnosis on how their child learns.

It will be important to explain that Signposts was initially written for children with intellectual disabilities, but that the practices and strategies identified in the program are suitable for all children demonstrating behaviours that are of concern to parents or carers.

It may be more effective initially for facilitators to refer to the specific behaviours rather than the disability. Use the term disability once you have established trust with the family. It can then be explained that certain behaviour; for example, a ten-year-old not being able to ask for what they want most probably would be described as having a disability in Anglo-Australian society.

Do not link difficult behaviour and intellectual disability. Instead, talk about the impact of the difficult behaviour on everyone.

Identify behaviours that are of concern to participants in the group or select a behaviour that would be relevant to the group such as:

- » refusing to go to bed when asked
- » not sitting at the table during meals
- » being noisy and disruptive when others are watching television
- » being disruptive in public places.

Then discuss how these behaviours affect parents and siblings.
For example:

- » parents are unable to relax and enjoy special activities with their children.
- » siblings get angry or upset, or resent that a sibling's behaviour spoils their special time watching television
- » family activities are "at risk" because of the unmanageable behaviour.

Some behaviours families identify as inappropriate may be considered appropriate in Anglo-Australian society, e.g. children initiating conversation with adults.

There will need to be ongoing discussion around what is considered to be appropriate an acceptable behaviour and acceptable management strategies in Anglo-Australian society.

Much of the terminology will need to be explained by the facilitator. If at any time you feel uncertain, ask participants what is culturally appropriate for them.

You may need to plan an initial session to address many of these

issues. In this session participants could be encouraged to talk about culturally appropriate family practices, particularly in relation to acceptable behavioural patterns. This will need to be discussed in relation to what is acceptable in terms of Anglo-Australian behaviour management in Australia. An important aim of this session will be to establish trust between facilitator and participants.

The Signposts procedures

There may be differences in approaches to:

- » discipline
- » communication and interaction between children and parents
- » application of negative consequences
 - » Hitting is often used as a negative consequence, which can lead to child protection issues. This will need to be discussed sensitively in terms of acceptance in Anglo-Australian culture.
- » food being given to manage behaviour.

Interpreters may have their own views about the content of the program, such as seeing some strategies discussed in Signposts as punishments.

At times, the facilitator may be made aware of practices that are not in line with Anglo-Australian principles, e.g. hitting. In this case, the facilitator needs to offer the family support through referral to ADEC or the appropriate ethno-specific support agencies, as well as fulfilling their own mandatory reporting requirements.

Signposts is a useful family resource

The vast majority of families who implement the strategies in the Signposts program find them to be useful.

The effectiveness of the format of the materials (the English language booklets, workbook and DVD) in communicating the content may be limited for some families of CALD communities. Some participants will have limited or no formal education and may need to be engaged almost exclusively through verbal communication and by using the DVD.

Others will make use of the various written materials in English (including summary sheets and the glossary in [CALD Parent Resources](#)) to supplement the discussions in which they participate in English or with the help of an interpreter.

A focus on parents

Some cultural groups will consider it appropriate that only professionals manage children's behaviour. You may need to stress that children learn in all the environments in which they participate, and that the home, which is managed by the parents, is a very important influence.

Families may have very specific gender roles related to decision-making and parenting practices. When discussing components of the Signposts program (particularly *Dealing with stress* and *Your family as a team*) and specific strategies, facilitators need to be alert to using appropriate examples and assisting participants to consider who they will engage in supporting them to implement the program.

The importance of practising strategies may need to be emphasised even more than usual. Facilitators may need to focus on effective ways of practising strategies during the sessions, and discuss with participants what support they might need to enlist to be able to implement these strategies at home.

Some families might be experiencing difficult circumstances including unemployment, disempowerment and depression, and the impact of their migration history. These circumstances might make it difficult for them to implement suggested strategies and, particularly, to establish and maintain routines. Strategies may need to be introduced over a longer period of time, and with greater attention paid to identifying and addressing factors that could facilitate or inhibit families' use of the strategies.

Using the modules and workbook

Emphasise the icons in the parent materials to guide participants through the activities in each module.

Where you need to minimise written materials, do the exercises in the workbook as a group where possible, with the facilitator recording whatever is necessary. Where participants are focusing on their own child, you can still describe the exercise verbally and (facilitator, interpreter, co-facilitators) assist participants to record their decisions as required.

The additional resource of the summary sheets included in the Resources of these supplementary materials provide another option which still gives parents a record of the key points of the

Module 1 – Measuring your child's behaviour

Preparation

Prior to this session prepare culturally relevant names and examples for at least some of the exercises. Encourage parents to provide their own examples during the session.

Prepare sufficient numbers of supplementary parent materials, summary sheets and the generic booklets for participants to have a choice.

Session rules

Check cultural considerations for session rules and adapt accordingly, e.g. it may be appropriate to have an extended greeting session. Expectations of participants may need to be modified. Conducting role plays, for example, may not be culturally appropriate.

Asking questions

Participants may not be willing to ask questions, or may not ask you to repeat information if they have not understood it. Let participants know that you want them to ask questions as often as they like. You will be able to address some issues at the time; others you will need to follow up individually after the session.

Role plays

Always refer to this as “practising” or “trying out” what we have just talked about. Parents may not wish to perform in a group setting, or consider it inappropriate. It may be more effective for the facilitator and interpreter or co-facilitators to demonstrate the practise. You may be able to gradually involve participants as trust is established. There may be one participant who is prepared to start. Use lots of examples.



Telephone test

The telephone test may be a difficult concept – descriptions may be better checked with a role play. For example, the facilitator acts out a behaviour and the participants describe what they remember seeing. Then, the facilitator acts out what the participants have described, leaving out any aspects of the behaviour not clearly detailed by the participants.

Describing your child's behaviour

You may need to teach the concept of clear descriptions using only positive behaviours, then the concept of clear descriptions using only negative behaviours so as not to mix the nature of the behaviour (good/not good) with the clarity or otherwise (good/not good) of the description.

Measuring

Plain English will be more effective with most participants.
You may decide to use:

- » “how often?” instead of “frequency”
- » “how long?” instead of “duration”
- » “how many?” (or, “how many can you see?”) instead of “permanent products”.

Substitute practise examples for Exercise 1E

1. John is giving his parents trouble every night because he takes a long time to go to sleep.
How would you measure this behaviour?
2. Ly has been kicking the wall lately.
How would you measure this behaviour?
3. Lana’s job is to fold family members’ socks after washing.
How would you measure this behaviour?
4. Andrew is very slow at getting ready for school in the morning.
How would you measure this behaviour?

Recording

Simplifying methods of recording, or assisting parents with their recording, will depend on individual needs. You may consider aids such as golf counters (for frequency), limiting recording to specific times of the day or week, or verbal reporting if necessary. Graphing can form a useful visual record. The facilitator could do this based on the parent’s verbal report of the behaviour.

Participants may have suggestions for what would work for them.

Homework

It is recommended that you do as much as possible within the session and help participants plan how they will implement the rest of the agreed activities. Remind participants that they should still come to the next session if they have forgotten or have been unable to do the homework.

Module 2 – Systematic use of daily interactions

Setting goals and using the goal achievement scale

Make sure you use culturally relevant examples to talk about setting goals, and complete this task in the session.

Possible scenarios:

- » Wearing a seat belt in the car
- » Staying at the table and eating the meal during mealtime
- » Having a shower/bath without crying

Some participants may not want to discuss their children or concerns in a group. You may need to develop parallel scenarios to describe during the session and check after the session that they have been able to apply the concept to their concerns.

Remember that participants may be very hesitant about practising strategies in a group setting.

Do not use domestic examples unless the group suggests them.

Identifying strengths

Check that participants have an understanding that strengths may be seen in behaviour that we do not like. This is different from what we were talking about in Module 1 when we asked participants to list five things their child had done recently that they liked and two things that they didn't like. The example in the Parent booklet Module 2 featuring Suresh is relevant.

The relevance of strengths as a basis for dealing with the difficult behaviour, and how to build on your child's strengths, may be quite a new way of thinking about behaviour that may need to be emphasised.

Relevant examples may include:

- » Asking appropriately for something
- » Occupying themselves while the parent does housekeeping tasks
- » Sitting in the bus seat on the way home from school

Triggers

The terms "trigger" may be quite unfamiliar, and the notion that the way we give instructions to children can affect whether they do what is required or not, may need considerable reinforcement. Use lots of examples of instructions, and emphasise the idea that the more specific the instruction, the more likely the child will carry it out.

Consequences

Positive consequences may be a new concept. If you alter the language of your description of positive outcomes, make sure you retain the focus on the idea that a positive consequence is something that makes it more likely that the behaviour will happen again. For example, a positive consequence for a child might be that they get to watch TV or to avoid doing something they don't like. If you do use descriptions for positive consequences such as "a happy outcome" or "something they like" make sure your audience understands that this means from the child's perspective, and with the goal of making the behaviour more likely to occur again. It has nothing to do with whether the outcome is positive for the parents or not.

Statements that link the two concepts, such as “Suki likes (whatever the consequence) so she is more likely to do (whatever the action) again”, will reinforce this connection.

Negative consequences may be equated with punishment. It is important to emphasise that a negative consequence is one that makes it less likely the behaviour will happen again. Cultural practices need to be kept in mind, but participants also need to recognise that for individual children certain consequences may or may not be negative because of their unique characteristics and preferences, e.g. time out might be a positive consequence for a child who has autism.

Triggers and consequences together

You may choose to substitute the following examples as alternative scenarios for Exercise 2D.

Trigger	Behaviour	Consequence	Effect on future behaviour
TV program finishes	Giuseppe asks his sister nicely to change the channel	Sister ignores Giuseppe’s request (that is, no consequence)	Giuseppe is less likely to ask his sister nicely again
Losing the game	Manisha throws the cards to her friend Nadia	Nadia packs up the cards and stops playing with Manisha	When Manisha loses a game

Alternative Scenario for Exercise 2D

Yuan and his mother go to the supermarket. Yuan sees the chocolate bars. He asks his mother for a chocolate bar. His mother says “No”. Yuan hits his mother, screaming and reaching for a chocolate bar. His mother gives him the chocolate bar.

- » What was the trigger for Yuan’s behaviour?
- » What was the consequence of Yuan’s behaviour?
- » What effect will the consequence have on Yuan’s future behaviour?

Household rules

Writing down household rules may not be appropriate for some families for cultural or literacy reasons. Pictorial representations may be useful for some families.

The following may be culturally appropriate examples to use:

- » Stay at the table for mealtimes.
- » Take your shoes off inside the house.
- » Wear shoes for going outside.
- » Wear a seat belt in the car.
- » Don’t hit your sister.
- » Don’t throw food.

Module 3 – Replacing difficult behaviour with useful behaviour

Remember to provide examples using names and scenarios that are appropriate for the participants.

Identifying the purpose of the difficult behaviour

Remember to consider each participant’s understanding and use of the terms ‘developmental delay’ and ‘intellectual disability’.

Obtaining physical pleasure

For some people, any discussion of masturbation in a group setting will be unacceptable. For others it may be acceptable if all participants, facilitators and others present are of the same gender.

Working out the purpose of your behaviour

This can be a quite complex discussion. Working through examples together as a group, then 1:1 assistance for each participant while they are working out the purpose of the identified behaviour for their child may be required. It may be helpful to talk with the interpreters prior to the session to make sure they understand what is required.

Encouraging an alternative behaviour

For some cultures skills of independence will not be seen as important, as independence will diminish the parent’s role. It may be more appropriate to ask if there are activities the parent wants the child to learn rather than assume that there are.

Be prepared to offer culturally appropriate suggestions, particularly ones suited to the gender of the child. It may be more useful to teach this using examples of encouraging communication skills.

Providing a trigger for the alternative behaviour

Remind participants that their instructions to the child are triggers for behaviour, and that they therefore need to provide an appropriate instruction to trigger this alternative behaviour.

Providing positive consequences for the alternative behaviour

Food is often used as a positive consequence in many cultures, although it may not necessarily be identified as a consequence. It might be appropriate, as with any family who frequently uses food as a consequence, to encourage them to pair use of food with labelled praise. Remind participants to be careful of the nature and the quantity of food they provide on each occasion, and to plan to reduce and finally to omit the food once the behaviour is improved. Encourage families to use alternatives to food wherever possible.

Providing negative consequences for the difficult behaviour

Hitting is often used as an acceptable negative consequence in many families. This needs to be discussed in terms of its acceptability in current Anglo-Australian culture, the fact that there are better options, and the mandatory requirements under which you work.

Focus on assisting parents to come up with alternatives for their interaction with their children. Consider referral to ADEC or other ethno-specific agencies for additional support.

Using time out

It is usually a good idea to include a careful description of “time out”, as many people apply this term to a variety of strategies that can be well or quite inappropriately used. Caution should be employed when working with families who have experienced trauma, particularly imprisonment or interrogation, or where there have been child protection concerns.

It is recommended that facilitators and/or interpreters demonstrate the scenarios if parents have been hesitant to participate actively in practises. Parents can participate by observing and, where appropriate, using the Time Out monitoring form to tick off the steps as they are enacted. If recording is difficult, just ask them to report at the end which steps they saw.

For the scenario to practise giving instructions, consider that some families may not have access to books or magazines, so elicit an alternative from the participants or provide another scenario. In regard to the second scenario, children might not be expected to do domestic tasks in some families. Perhaps substitute doing homework or eating their meal.

Flow charts

Assist parents to decide on the purpose of their child's difficult behaviour. Where you are minimising the use of written material, provide them just with a copy of the most appropriate flow chart to guide their decisions about the sequence of action they need to take. You might need to work through each step with individual parents, and help them to record their decisions in the Action Plan, even if the parents does not record the rest of the action plan.

Module 4 – Planning for better behaviour

Overview

Now is an important time to review participants’ progress with their own actions and the changes they have observed in their child’s behaviour. It may be appropriate to refine some strategies, to celebrate successes to date, and to look at ways to encourage participants to implement various strategies at home if they have been having difficulty thus far.

Planning daily routines

Daily routines (sequences of tasks that are typically associated with a particular time of day) may not be familiar experiences for some families. Some will find it difficult to plan because of the instability of their living situations. Some may have such limited access to resources that survival issues demand most of their energy. Some have so many factors competing for their time and attention that they have to respond to the current top priority rather than adhere to routines. Barriers such as unemployment, disempowerment and depression, and separation from community may need to be taken into account.

Examples of routines

Asking participants to reflect on their usual daily activities, or those of other family members, may elicit more appropriate examples than using the examples in the Module 4.

For some cultural groups, roles within the families may be clearly defined, and these will determine who participates in certain routines.

Planning for high risk times

The term ‘high risk’ may be emotive for some families, who may associate it with protective concerns. The key is getting participants to recognise situations where it is “highly likely” that the child’s behaviour will be difficult because the setting may not be very suitable for children, such as waiting for an appointment, visiting relatives, etc.

Module 5 – Developing more skills in your child

Some parents strongly believe that school teachers are the experts and that as parents they have no role in teaching their children.

Facilitators may need to revisit the idea that children learn in every environment, and that those who have delays or intellectual disabilities are slower to learn and often need more structured teaching than other children.

Teaching your child new skills

Facilitators may need to focus on the role of teaching new skills in order to replace difficult behaviour, and less on the benefits children gain by learning to be more independent.

Consider examples that are appropriate to the participants and that may not be specifically self-help skills. For example, a parent may want their child to learn to occupy themselves quietly while the rest of the family watch a TV program or while the mother does a domestic task.

Discuss with interpreters and participants. Ask what parents would want or let their child do, rather than make assumptions that they will want the child to learn the next steps toward independent living. Or use examples of learning new communication skills to teach the concepts to the participants.

Ways of teaching skills to your child

It may be appropriate to discuss how participants learnt things from their parents. Focus on observation as a lead-in to teaching by showing. Elicit other examples as a lead-in to step-by-step teaching.

Putting it all together

Exercises 5E, F, G in the parents' workbook.

An appropriate example for discussion of what parents might like to work on would be:

- » Given an appropriate video or TV program, Udo will watch the program without disturbing other members of the family.

Your child at school

For some groups, roles are quite clearly defined, and managing the child's behaviour is designated to certain family members. There may be difficulty in understanding what a school has to offer with regard to dealing with behaviour. This is an opportunity to discuss expectations of schools (including various staff such as teachers, welfare co-ordinators, integration aides) and roles they can play and what expectations they can or do have of parents.

Some participants may have had little or no formal education, or experiences very different to the approach currently taken in Australian schools. Teachers may be seen as in positions of high authority, and parents may believe that they have no right to ask questions of them or to express any concerns.

On the other hand, if parents do not understand or accept the definition of disability and understand the nature of the services offered in Australia, they may feel hostile toward individual staff or toward a school/agency if there is any reference to disability or their expectations of the child or indeed their expectations of the parents. Consultation with ADEC or other cultural agencies may be useful at this point.

It might be helpful to lead a discussion about good communication between parents and schools that ties together the key points:

- » Consistent use of interpreters
- » Brief written communications
- » Taking an advocate to meetings
- » Holding meetings at times when other family members can be present
- » Making sure parents have contact details for relevant services

A good starting point would be to ask parents what has worked best for them in the past.

Your family as a team

In a number of families the child’s difficult behaviour will be of minor concern compared to other factors such as unemployment, dislocation, depression or migrant history, which have a far more significant impact on their ability to function effectively as a family.

It must also be remembered that where roles are clearly defined and accepted by all parties, that group (including families) is likely to function well. Members of a family do not necessarily have to share the same roles to support each other as a team.

An important factor to discuss is that when a family is attempting to make changes to a child’s behaviour, family members may need to put in more effort in different ways than what is usually done in order to bring about the change.

Discuss with participants who can help them when help is required. It may be a partner, other relatives or friends, siblings or someone from outside the family. If you have a range of participants, particularly if you have fathers in the group, you might ask them to make suggestions in a way that does not put them personally on the spot.

Speaking skills

Some of the strategies are not appropriate to some cultural groups. For example “I” messages are not consistent with the way some groups express themselves because they would not usually say how they feel.

The key messages remain the same. Speak in a way that your listener has the best chance of understanding what you really mean; do not blame your listener or make them feel uncomfortable; talk about what you want to happen now rather than describing what has happened in the past.

Listening skills

Many families have their own way of addressing problems. The options provided here are designed to help when the solutions tried so far have not worked well for a particular problem. The strategies suggested may be modified to suit individual families, such as parents only being involved in the discussion, or parents and a facilitator having the discussion before the children are told what is going to happen, or a male facilitator discussing the issues with the father and then the rest of the family being told the decision. Facilitators and other staff present can model the skills for the group, rather than participants being expected to do so, if that is more appropriate.

Dealing with stress in the family

A number of families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have first- or second-hand experience of natural or man-made disasters, often on a major scale. The ongoing impacts of trauma are part of their daily lives. Many people have experienced uncertainty and dislocation before, and possibly since, their arrival in Australia.

Contemporary experiences may be a product of limited verbal and written fluency in English, financial restraints, loss of previous professional or community status, limited support from the general community, and unsupportive perceptions of disability in the general community as well as in their own cultural community.

These are all factors over which individuals have had very little control but which have a significant impact on how they deal with stress in their daily life.

Facilitators may wish to refer back to the Cultural Competence Checklist.

Recognising what stresses you

It may be helpful to guide parents to think about a relatively minor stressor to work on in this session. There may be some participants for whom this would best be done individually, or only through observation of others' discussions. Ensure that participants have contact details of relevant organisations (refer to the list in the cultural guide) and encourage them to make contact with those agencies, other program participants or their own family or friends if they feel upset or keep thinking about these issues more than usual after the session. Parentline (Victoria, Australia) and telephone interpreters may also be helpful.

Managing stress

Where roles in a family are very prescriptive, there may be limited options for significant changes to lifestyle. Remind participants that even small changes can make a difference.

Facilitator resources

In order to work effectively and respectfully with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds it is important to have an understanding of what is meant by culture, how a person’s culture impacts on them and what factors impact on a person’s understanding of their culture.

What is culture?

Culture refers to the entire social heritage of a distinct group of people. This heritage can include: values, perceptions, ideas, attitudes and goals.

Culture simply refers to the way of life and worldviews of particular groups of people. Culture informs and affects all human behaviour. It is a reflection of our attitudes, beliefs, expectations and goals.

Factors impacting on a person’s culture

Although persons of the same cultural and linguistic background may share elements in common (such as their language), many other factors influence individual actions and the degree to which people identify with a cultural group.

These factors may include: socio-economic status, education level, time of arrival in Australia, religion, age and gender. Because of these factors, it is inappropriate to generalise about an ethnic group by assuming everyone will be the same.

Cross cultural consultation

Practitioners who work with families from cultural backgrounds different from their own are in a unique position to work collaboratively. For tips on helping parents achieve the best results, such as how to get to know parents in a respectful manner, engaging them in a thoughtful consultation process and working with professional interpreters, visit the Facilitators section in the Signposts website.

Using the checklist

When working with families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds the following information will help you understand their culture.

Cultural Competence Checklist

To obtain a better understanding of a person’s culture you might wish to use the Cultural Competence Checklist below. The list may help you consider important elements that will help you understand the culture and social factors that play a part in the life of the family you are working with.

Nationality and ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Where were family members born?
	<input type="checkbox"/> How long has the family been in Australia?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the family’s ethnic affiliation?
Migration history	<input type="checkbox"/> What were the family’s pre-migration experiences?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What were the family’s migration experiences?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What have been the family’s settlement experiences on arriving in Australia?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Who are the family’s major support people?
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> What are the family’s primary and secondary languages?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Is the family happy to use an interpreter?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What are the family’s writing and reading abilities in their own language and in English?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the family’s non-verbal communication style?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the family’s ability to communicate verbally in English with professionals?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Is there a difference between the communication styles of different members of the family?

Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the family’s religion?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Are all members of the family of the same religion?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the importance of religion in their daily life?
Familiarity with Western services and healing methods	<input type="checkbox"/> Do the family use traditional or folk healing methods concurrently with Western medical treatments?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the use and expectation of a holistic method to a healing approach?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Is there an expectation that the family be involved in consultations about conditions and programs?
Values, attitudes and roles	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the importance of gender issues in the family?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the importance of age in the family?
	<input type="checkbox"/> How important are these values in the family and how are they shown: pride, self-reliance, self-control, submission, anger, conformity, stoicism, displays of emotion, disapproval?
	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the attitude towards disability in the family?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Do all the extended family members hold the same values about a disability?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Are there issues for elderly family members, e.g. language, role changes, economic dependency?

Source: Multicultural Mental Health Australia, 2004

Key websites

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS): Early Childhood Research Insitute
<http://www.clas.uiuc.edu/techreport/tech14.html>

Southside Community Services website cultural dictionary (1.31 MB pdf)
http://www.sscs.org.au/uploaded_files/fck/cultural_dictionary.pdf

Websites with information on range of cultures

The following resources may be useful to help you better understand different cultures.

ADEC (Action on Disability in Ethnic Communities)
<http://www.adec.org.au>

CareLink telephone service and website (provides contact number of service provider requested in a particular suburb/region)
P: 1800 052 222
<http://www.commCarelink.health.gov.au>

Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health
<http://www.ceh.org.au>

Disability Information Victoria
<http://www.disabilityinfo.org.au>

Diversity Victoria: a coalition of non-political and not-for-profit organisation. (General information and activities that support cultural diversity.)
<http://www.diversity.vicnet.net.au>

Ethnic Services Guide to Services
<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/acmh/aged/accessing/guide/ethnic.htm>

Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia
<http://www.fecca.org.au>

Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association NSW
<http://www.mdaa.org.au>

Primary Care Partnership
<http://www.infoxchange.net.au/pcpnet>

The Settlement Database (SDB) (statistics and information on settling in Australia from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs)
<http://www.immi.gov.au/settle>

Victorian Multicultural Commission
<http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/>

Websites with access to translated information

Better Health Channel
<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>

Multilingual glossary of technical and popular medical terms in nine European languages
<http://Allserv.rug.ac.be/~rvdstich/eugloss/welcome.html>

Open Road
<http://www.openroad.vic.gov.au>

SANE Factsheets (information on psychosis and schizophrenia)
<http://www.sane.org>

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