

Culture-Specific Information

Older Australians come from many different backgrounds with varied life experiences. They enjoy diverse lifestyles and identify with many cultural groups. Understanding an individual's background is key to ensuring that they get the best from their aged care experiences.

Culture-specific information can help us gain insight into the circumstances and experiences of people who may share ethnicity, language, religion or a myriad of other characteristics that individuals identify with or groups that they belong to. It is important to remember however that within any cultural grouping, peoples' values, behaviour and beliefs can vary enormously and that culture-specific information is useful only in as far as it can provide some basic insights which can help to inform your work with individual consumers.

Migration Experience

Migration can be a key influence on a person's life, with differing effects due to the experiences of pre-migration, migration and resettlement. While some migrants undergo a relatively easy transition, most migrants will undergo some - if not many - challenges in adjusting to life in a new country

Some of the many post-migration stressors include the stress of separation from homeland, family members, friends and support networks; racial discrimination; changes in lifestyle and socio-economic status; culture shock; language barriers; and the ongoing trauma of pre-migration experiences, which may have included war and political instability, physical and psychological abuse, and travelling as a refugee or asylum seeker or living in a refugee camp.

Key Considerations

- Consult with consumers and their families/carers about aspects of their cultural traditions or religion that are meaningful to them.
- Access resources that can help you gain insight into different language, ethnic or religious traditions and migration/refugee experiences of older migrants in Australia.
- Use culture-specific information as a guide to asking questions – not all people identify in the same way with their cultural or religious background.
- Avoid stereotyping and making assumptions.
- Be aware of judging other people's behaviour and beliefs according to the standards of your own life experiences.

Practice guide

Useful Resources

Cultural Atlas

SBS

The Cultural Atlas is an interactive online resource providing comprehensive information on the countries that Australia's biggest migrant populations have originated from.

Ageing in Australia: The Immigrant Experience (DVD)

Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing

This DVD features 4 people from different migrant backgrounds who are approaching the later stages of life. They share their migration experiences, reflections on living in Australia and hopes as they age in Australia. A *Discussion Guide* has been developed to accompany the DVD which can be also downloaded from the link above.

Bridging Cultures – A Guide to the Diverse Cultures in Australia for Aged Care Service Providers

Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) NSW

LAST UPDATED: JANUARY 2022

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