

What is the Framework and how was it developed?

Project and Framework Background

The Embrace Project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health to provide a national focus on mental health and suicide prevention for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

The project is delivered by an alliance between Mental Health Australia, the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) and the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA).

The project is informed by two key advisory groups – a CALD Mental Health Consumer & Carer Group and a Stakeholder Group.

In recognition of the need for tailored approaches to mental health for Australians from CALD backgrounds, various iterations of a national multicultural mental health project have existed in Australia for around 20 years.

The current National Multicultural Mental Health Project (the Project) is being delivered by Mental Health Australia in alliance with the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA), the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) and mental health consumers and carers from CALD backgrounds. Project activities are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health until 31 December 2020, and are informed by two advisory groups: a CALD Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group and a Stakeholder Group.



The Project builds on the achievements of previous national projects and aims towards an equitable mental health system and improved mental health and wellbeing for Australia's multicultural population. The Project provides a coordinated approach to meeting the unique needs and challenges faced by people from CALD backgrounds. This includes providing a platform to increase national networking and collaboration opportunities for mental health practitioners working with people from CALD backgrounds.

Crucially, the Project works to improve the cultural responsiveness of mainstream mental health services to meet the needs of the diverse Australian population. This is being achieved through further development and implementation of the Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia.

Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia (The Framework)

The Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia was developed to help services and individual workers to evaluate and enhance their cultural responsiveness. It includes self-assessment against cultural competency standards along with implementation guidance and supporting resources. It is a free national resource and available to any service provider. The Framework has been piloted across Australia and an independent review was undertaken in 2016.

The National Mental Health Commission recommended widespread adoption of the Framework in order to improve cultural responsiveness of Australian mental health services in their Contributing Lives Review (2014). Implementation of the Framework has also been supported at state and local levels, for example by the QLD Mental Health Commission and the PHN Advisory Panel on Mental Health.

The Framework is designed to build capacity amongst mainstream mental health services to work effectively with people and communities from CALD backgrounds. The Project is taking a strong national approach in ensuring that the Framework is promoted and utilised amongst Primary Health Networks, state and territory funded public mental health services and nongovernment services delivering mental health care. This systemic approach to promoting best practice, quality improvement and enhanced access to services for people from CALD backgrounds is key to addressing some of the issues and barriers faced by CALD individuals, families and communities accessing mental health services and information.

The Framework is mapped to national standards, particularly the National Mental Health Standards and the National Quality and Safety Standards and will assist services to fulfil their existing accreditation requirements.

The Framework is a core part of the project's work. It is a free, national, online resource for mental health services, mental health practitioners, Primary Health Networks and others to assess and improve their cultural responsiveness.

The Framework redevelopment has occurred through a process of consultation, discussion and review and has been informed by the Review of the Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia by the Australian Health Services Research Institute (2016).

This new version of the Framework sees the content streamlined into a series of core service modules,

with the addition of two self-reflection tools and free access to an entry level cultural awareness module.

The modules are self-paced, and have self-determined email reminders built into them to guide ongoing and sustainable action. The material is available online, and summaries of results, action plans and certificates can be printed for your easy reference.

The modules are supported by a wealth of resources on the Embrace Project website including access to online forums, webinars, a searchable Knowledge Hub, video personal stories, translated fact sheets and a range of other information.

These core service modules are divided into specific areas of cultural responsiveness:

Four core service modules

Planning Strategically to meet Multicultural Community Needs

Developing Safe, Quality and Culturally responsive services

Working Together to Promote Mental Health in Multicultural Communities

Building a Culturally Responsive Workforce

These core modules are supported by an entry-level background module which is freely accessible and provides a foundation of key concepts in cultural



awareness. It is recommended that individuals or services complete this module if they are new to cultural awareness/cultural responsiveness and need a general place to start.

Two self-reflection tools have also been developed – one for Primary Health Networks and the services they commission, and one for individual practitioners.

We encourage you to tailor your use of the Framework to your local needs, including rural and remote locations. We also encourage you to share best practice examples and challenges you have experienced with the project to benefit others. These can be identified or de-identified.

Overview

This Framework builds upon a valuable legacy of work in the field of multicultural mental health in Australia. We are proud to present to you the updated and redeveloped version of the Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia.

This particular legacy began in 2008, with the creation of the Cultural Competency Standards – The Audit Tool in Western Australia. In 2010, Multicultural Mental Health Australia (MMHA) in partnership with the Western Australian Mental Health Commission built upon this original tool, with the development of the National Cultural Competency Tool (NCCT) for Mental Health Services. Most recently, in 2014 the Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia was developed, launched and piloted by the Mental Health in Multicultural Australia (MHIMA) Project.

We would like to extend our respect and gratitude to all people and organisations who have contributed to this legacy, and more broadly to improving mental health and wellbeing for Australia's multicultural population.



Many people and organisations have made considerable contributions to this iteration of the Framework, for which we are sincerely grateful. We would particularly like to thank the following organisations for their expert advice:

- The [Embrace Project Culturally and Linguistically Diverse \(CALD\) Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group](#), which includes a consumer and a carer representative from a CALD background from each state and territory of Australia
- The [Embrace Project Stakeholder Group](#), which includes representatives of the Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT), the Transcultural Mental Health Centre (NSW), Victorian Transcultural Mental Health (VTMH), the Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre, Brisbane South Primary Health Network, Primary Health Tasmania, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP), the Harmony Alliance, Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council (AGMC), the Centre for Cultural, Ethnicity and Health, Centre for Multicultural Youth, the Refugee Health Network of Australia (RHeaNA), the Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA), the Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health
- The [Framework Steering Group](#), which includes representatives from Brisbane South Primary Health Network, the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, the Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT) network, and the Transcultural Mental Health Centre (NSW) and members of the Project Team
- The [Embrace Project Alliance](#), which includes Mental Health Australia, the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) and the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)
- The [Australian Health Services Research Institute](#), who conducted the Review of the Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia (2016).

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