

From Individuals to Communities Poster

Presented by
P.E.A.C.E Multicultural Services

P.E.A.C.E (**Personal Education And Community Empowerment**) is a state wide service based at Relationships Australia SA, funded by the South Australian Government¹ to address issues related to HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C and problem gambling across culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in South Australia.

Our Aim:

P.E.A.C.E. Multicultural Services aims to build and maintain healthy communities by facilitating access to culturally and linguistically appropriate support and information to individuals. At the same time our aim is to build the capacity of communities to both prevent problem gambling and the spread of these diseases as well as to minimise their harmful impacts.

Our Work is Influenced by:

- Commitment to change the power relations between the dominant culture and migrant cultural groups
- Community Capacity Building Approaches
- Narrative Ideas & Approaches

P.E.A.C.E. Response

People may be far more receptive to information received via community networks or respected peers rather than mainstream clinicians. Yet the provision of information alone is not a solution, but requires effective support through a variety of medium. However, the preparation of appropriate leaflets in community languages (for example) is a difficult and time consuming process. Translations must be checked for cultural appropriateness, literacy levels and nuance among focus groups. Providing information in this way, without providing links for support and advice, risks not merely a lack of effectiveness, but possibly doing actual harm through raising avoidable and possibly unnecessary anxiety.

The issues that we take into consideration when we respond to communities issues are:

- CALD communities tend to be isolated from mainstream community and particularly services, through language barriers, fragmentation of relationships through migration and cultural differences
- Family units and networks are placed under considerable pressure as a result of this social isolation particularly when major issues such as gambling, Hepatitis C and/or HIV is impacting relationships
- CALD individuals and families are forced to respond to racism and injustice, which can further isolate people and generate problems
- Different cultural traditions and practices in relation to treatment need to be valued and recognised

Building strong relationships with CALD communities is always a priority for the P.E.A.C.E. team as it creates a space for both the community and us to express concerns and exchange ideas on a regular basis. This ultimately allows us to develop shared understanding of the issues and ways of tackling them.

Active meaningful involvement of community members in the education and training processes has consistently helped to overcome the challenges and produce good outcomes such as creating conversations about taboo topics, promoting harmony and connectedness, reducing stigma, better understanding the need of individuals affected by the issue, increased level of inquiries and testing level, higher level of adherence to treatment and much more.

¹ through the HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C Policy and Programs Unit and the Gambling Rehabilitation Fund

How to Read this Poster

We recruit and train community educators and community ambassadors from a wide variety of culturally and linguistically diverse groups to assist in meeting community needs.

Our links to the communities are depicted in the poster and described below.

Communities *(groups of figures of different colours)*

Although each community we work with is clearly and separately identified, P.E.A.C.E. strives to create connectedness across communities to ensure that issues are normalised and not unique to specific groups.

Community Educators *(in blue forming the inner ring)*

Community Educators receive initial training within the Nationally Recognised Qualifications. After successfully completing their training they become educators, working 3-4 hours a week providing information, support and referrals to individuals, families and groups within their own community. They also provide links to mainstream and CALD agencies and to P.E.A.C.E. Community Educators live within their own community; they provide information and support services whenever it is most needed.

Community Ambassadors *(figures within the groups of a different shade)*

Community Ambassadors are volunteers recruited from a wide range of networks within one specific community. Community Ambassadors are also trained by P.E.A.C.E. in HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, problem gambling and relevant cultural issues. Their graduation is celebrated with a cultural ceremony during a public event to generate conversations and discussion about the issue. After training, the Community Ambassadors meet regularly to discuss the issues they face, share stories and talk about their needs.

P.E.A.C.E. Team *(white figures in the centre)*

The Community Educators are supported by the Community Ambassadors at a community level and by two P.E.A.C.E. Project Officers. The first project officer works with them in developing strategies specific to their own communities as well as providing education sessions and activities. The second project officer supports the ongoing training needs of Community Educators to enable them gain further qualifications in community services. Community Educators often have other talents and skills that can be used to engage with communities around sensitive issues. The P.E.A.C.E. Multicultural Services Manager works with community leaders and helps increase awareness among and across CALD communities and to develop networks and specific projects, as well as addressing all advocacy issues and clients' concerns. P.E.A.C.E. also work with specific community workers (for example Arabic speaking or Khmer speaking) to provide support and learning opportunities for them to develop shared understandings of the issues and ways of responding to them. This prevents community confusion and promotes collective actions and solidarity.²

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