

## **Introduction to Module 3:**

### **Communicating effectively across cultures**

A training module presented by the Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit

This is the third module, presented to Victorian mental health professionals, as of the Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit's 2009 Pilot Training Course entitled *Culturally competent mental health service provision for a multicultural society*. It has two parts; *working with interpreters in mental health settings* and *communicating effectively with consumers and carers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds*.

The Census data in 2006 indicates that 20.4% of Victorians speak a language other than English at home and that more than 200 languages and dialects are spoken. This highlights the challenges facing mental health workers as they seek to respectfully communicate with consumers from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. It also emphasizes the need for mental health staff to develop skills in working effectively with interpreters in mental health settings, in order to conduct culturally informed psychiatric assessments and improve the quality of care and treatment they provide.

#### ***Working with interpreters in mental health settings***

This session;

- discusses the complexities surrounding establishing a shared meaning between mental health services staff and consumers/carers with limited English proficiency
- outlines how to identify, book and effectively work with an appropriate interpreter

Using a DVD to demonstrate "how not to work with interpreters" and "how to work effectively with interpreters" and interactive group discussions the session explores;

- the factors that impact on the accurate transmission of meaning from one language to another
- the role of an interpreter and the role of a mental health worker in the interpreted interview
- considerations required for an effective interpreted interview to take place

Upon completion of this session, participants will demonstrate the ability to;

- assess the CALD background consumer and/or carer's need for an interpreter and know in what situations an interpreter should be accessed
- know how to identify a CALD background consumer/carer's correct language and how to book an appropriate interpreter
- know how to brief an interpreter prior to the interview; organise and set up the room, facilitate an effective interpreted interview and review the interpreted interview

#### **Communicating with consumers and carers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds**

Developed by the VTPU in collaboration with ADEC and VICSERV, this session provides participants with an opportunity to learn more about;

- the particular issues facing CALD consumers, their families and carers
- relevant resources, services, references and reports

A consumer consultant and advocate explains the importance of seeing each consumer as a member of a family, friendship or community group and outlines how the strengths approach to case management offers an especially effective framework for doing this. A carer consultant also speaks about some of the challenges that CALD families face when caring for family members, the disheartening and isolating impact of the stigma that persists in many community groups and

some ways that mental health workers can help. Finally, representatives from ADEC share their knowledge and experience of providing consumers and families with support and outline the value of language and culturally specific self-help and support groups.

In summary this session encourages participants to reflect on their current practice, listen to the experience of mental health consumers and their families and explore ways of building trust and a shared understanding with consumers, their families and carers from diverse backgrounds.