

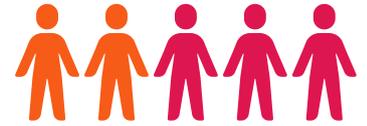
# Multicultural Lived Experience Framework

Health is a human right, for everyone.  
Multicultural lived experience is the missing voice in the Australian healthcare system.

Evidence shows that health services co-designed with the people who use them, are more effective.

Australia is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse nations in the world.

**Multicultural lived experience is a large missing voice.**



Almost two in five Queenslanders were born overseas or had at least one parent born overseas.



More than 1 in 10 Queenslanders spoke a language other than English at home

## Multicultural lived experience framework

### Our Voices

Multicultural lived experience is shaped by migration, settlement and acculturation. These in turn are shaped by social, cultural, economic and political drivers and may or may not also involve marginalisation, oppression and discrimination as commonly experienced by migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum.

Including multicultural lived experience in the health system, service planning, service delivery and consultation room, leads to better health outcomes, health equity and health justice.

Multicultural lived experience is an important component of the lived experience consumer movement. Health is a human right for everyone.

#healthequityjustice  
#healthisahumanright  
#multiculturalismmainstream



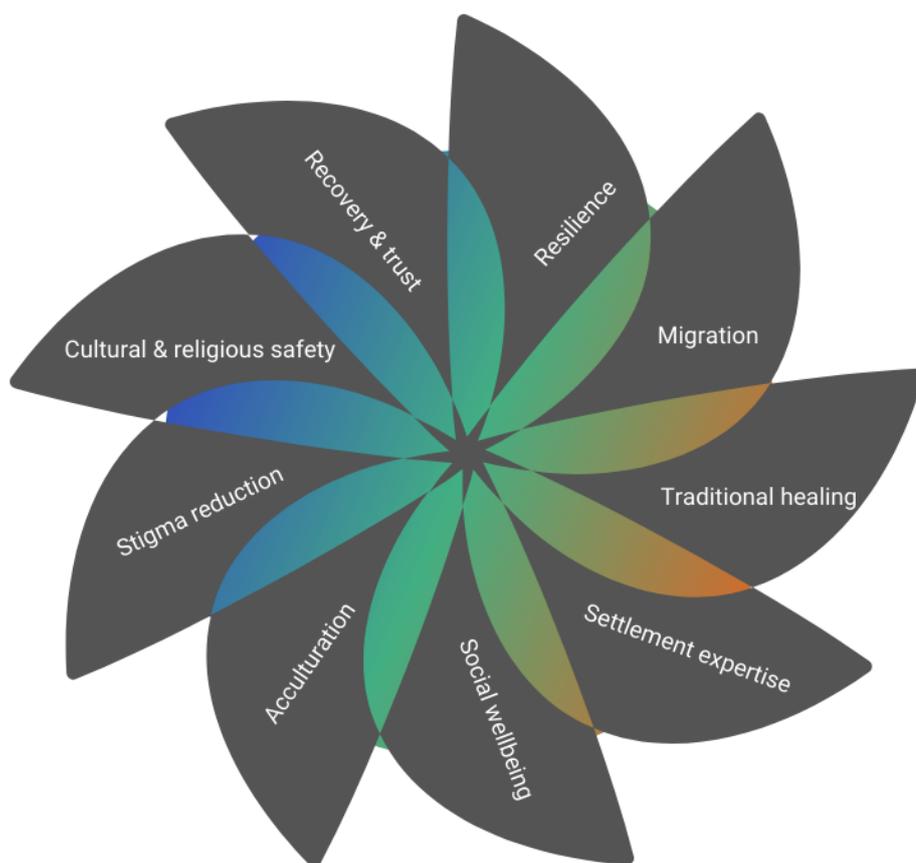
# Multicultural lived experience

The Australian culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) population is highly diverse. The journeys of migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum are vastly different. Their unique and shared experiences impact on the care they receive as health consumers.

Multicultural lived experience encompasses the experiences, knowledge and understanding of people from CALD backgrounds. It incorporates lived and living experience that is ongoing. It draws on their personal experiences of migration, settlement, acculturation *and* experiences of becoming unwell, seeking health services and recovery.

The lived experience of people from CALD backgrounds provides powerful insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the healthcare system and how the inequity that lies within it, can be best tackled.

**It is the missing voice.**



# 01 CALD person

Being understood, valued, respected and encouraged is fundamental to recovery. The multicultural lived experience of Multicultural Peer Support Workers can encourage and support the recovery of CALD people experiencing mental health issues by supporting people and carers to: develop a recovery-oriented perspective, develop important life skills, empower through identifying and pursuing visions and goals in a strength-based approach and also through the redevelopment of valued roles. Shared understanding of both the culture of origin and the new culture helps to better navigate the mainstream community's norms, systems and ways of life. The CALD person, peer worker and health worker develop shared understanding, empathy and connection that is grounded in familiarity with socio-economic, cultural, political and historic factors of the country of origin and the new home country.

**Multicultural lived experience opportunity:** co-delivery can improve cultural and religious safety, reduce stigma, bolster strengths, build resilience and promote recovery.



PRACTICE LEVEL

# 02 Health workforce

Culturally responsive service delivery and practice requires contextual understanding of socio-political and historic drivers that impact on CALD communities and individuals, as well as the influence of culture, acculturation, settlement, system and societal marginalisation, socioeconomic status, health literacy and explanatory models.

There is high risk for misdiagnosis and harmful treatment without contextual understanding. Consumers can be incorrectly and unfairly labelled as non-engaging or non-compliant.

When health workers engage Multicultural Peer Workers into the therapeutic relationship or treatment team, they increase their cultural capability, demonstrate value for multicultural lived experience and support equal partnerships.

**Multicultural lived experience opportunity:** consultation, co-delivery and partnership can improve cultural capability, cultural and contextual understanding and client engagement and lead to safer services.

# 03 Service planning

Most health services take a 'one size fits all' approach and call it 'universal healthcare'. This approach advantages the mainstream population and further disadvantages diverse communities who are not reflected in health services. There is increasing evidence that services designed by the users, are more effective and produce better health outcomes. Including the multicultural lived experience of CALD service users can lead to improve service access, culturally inclusive services, reach and engagement with 'hard to reach' communities and leads to needs-informed service planning.

Understanding and catering for the needs of the local community is fundamental to good service planning. This means, the whole local community.

**Multicultural lived experience opportunity:** co-design and community needs-based responses can improve access, engagement, equity and health outcomes.

*CALD community participation in service planning creates a bridge between the CALD population and mainstream services*

# 04 Health system

The Australian health system does not reflect, nor cater for the diversity within the Australian population. Health systems, services, policy and investment largely ignore the needs of multicultural populations. Tackling the health inequity created by the health system requires long-term commitment and a strategic response.

Multicultural lived experience is the missing voice in the Australian consumer movement. It is absent from research, consultation, policy advice and system design processes. It needs to be understood, incorporated, valued and amplified.

**Multicultural lived experience opportunity:** inclusive representation, engagement and co-design can safeguard health rights, achieve health equity, facilitate inclusive public policy and equitable investment reflective of the population.



# Framework development

The Multicultural Lived Experience Framework was developed by a team of Multicultural Peer Support Workers (MPSWs). Two MPSWs acted as facilitators and were briefed on the scope, context and content boundaries of the framework development work. We in turn embarked on a process of regular meetings, discussions, workshops and exploration with an additional four MPSWs who all had distinct migratory and cultural backgrounds. Together we explored the deep meanings and experiences of multicultural lived experience and the role of the MPSW.

The team collectively dissected 'lived experience' – our individual understanding, definitions and interpretations, the cultural meanings, the generally accepted meanings. We intentionally used our personal and collective lived experience to reach shared understanding and themes that formed the basis of the framework. We quickly agreed that multicultural lived experience is much more than providing cultural and linguistic peer support.

The co-production process required a great deal of relationship and trust building. Each MPSW contributed deeply personal and sometimes traumatic experiences to the shared discussions. Whilst incredibly rich and unique contributions were documented, safety and wellbeing precautions had to be observed too. We recognised that lived experience includes living experience and this may lead to vulnerability. We were mindful of safeguarding each other's dignity. We also became cognisant of the financial pressures some of our team members were under, who very reluctantly had to leave the process due to the need to find more hours of employment.

We shared our insights, findings and experiences with non-peer team members who documented our processes and the framework we collectively developed. We reached out to the whole MPSW team (an additional 50 MPSWs) and we conducted workshops to test our ideas and seek their input and guidance.

The team developed a deep comradery not experienced in other projects. The sharing and unearthing of individual relentless experiences of racism, systemic barriers, feelings of not being good enough, not feeling valued in society, fostered strong bonds, feelings of empowerment, shared authenticity and friendship.

We experienced the healing power of peer support, ourselves.

*Multicultural Lived Experience  
Framework Team*



# Multicultural peer support workers

Multicultural Peer Support Workers bring their own unique lived experience of migration, acculturation, cultural adaptation, and the impact of their settlement journeys on their own health and mental health.

Multicultural Peer Support Workers play a key role in ensuring services are culture based; that health care is grounded within the cultural health beliefs and explanatory models of the CALD person; and they build on shared cultural strengths.

They are a valued asset in the service delivery team that contribute so more than provide cultural and religious safety, and cultural and linguistic support. They encourage and affirm the CALD person to engage, trust, seek recovery, and use their voice.

World Wellness Group has a team of more than 50 MPSWs who are valued members of the service delivery team. More information: [worldwellnessgroup.org.au/our-voices/](http://worldwellnessgroup.org.au/our-voices/)

## Glossary of terms\*

**Acculturation** - changes that take place as a result of contact with culturally dissimilar people, groups, and social influences. Although these changes can take place as a result of almost any intercultural contact, acculturation is most often observed in individuals living in countries or regions other than where they were born—that is, among migrants, refugees, and people seeking asylum.

**Health equity** - All people should have a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential, and no one should be disadvantaged in achieving this potential if it can be avoided ([nhmrc.gov.au](http://nhmrc.gov.au)). Health inequity is defined as differences in health that are avoidable and also considered unfair or unjust. Issues of equity can impact on health in a number of ways, including socially or economically disadvantaged groups who experience different prevalence of disease or poorer health outcomes, groups who have different levels of access to health interventions (e.g. due to geographic distance, economic barriers or discrimination), and groups who may respond differently to interventions (such as migrants and refugees).

**Lived experience** - In the context of this framework, we have expanded on the definition used by the *Queensland Framework for the Development of the Mental Health Lived Experience Workforce* to define the role as people who are employed in a role where they (1) use their personal understanding and life experience of life-changing health and mental health challenges, and their own migration, acculturation, cultural adaptation and settlement experiences to assist others (2) use their life-changing experience of supporting someone through health and mental health challenges, settlement and acculturation, service use and periods of healing/personal recovery, to assist others

**Multicultural Peer Support Workers (MPSWs)** -work closely alongside health and human service workers to facilitate individually and culturally tailored support and care. They do this by drawing on their own culture and lived experience of migration, settlement and psycho-social stressors impacting on health and mental health. A large part of the role of the MPSW is to facilitate therapeutic engagement between clients and the health service provider.

**Peer support** - involves both giving and receiving support by people who use their own experiences to help others. Everyone's experience is treated as equally important and there are many different forms of peer support including one to one support, peer groups, mentoring and in online forums.

**Settlement** - A two-way process where migrants and refugees resettle in a new country and are made to feel welcome. Settlement means different things to different people: for some it is safety, to build a future and to have the same rights to which everyone else is entitled. Many describe it as a feeling of belonging and a place to build a future.

\*references available on request

This Multicultural Lived Experience Framework was developed with the support of the Brisbane North PHN