



*Cultural Perspectives on Dementia*

*Maria Johns*

**Multicultural Aged Care**



## *Culture is...*

- **a way of life yet is a worldview of a particular group of people or individuals.**

Thus

- **Culture refers to the language, rituals, and traditions yet beliefs, values and perception impacting us outwardly and inwardly**



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# *Cultural Perspectives*

**This session will cover:**

- Identifying how Cultural Diversity impacts Dementia within CALD communities .
- Identify barriers and challenges
- Recommendations
- Cultural Intelligence framework



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# *Cultural Perspectives*

**People living in Australia have always been and are today Culturally  
and Linguistically Diverse**



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# *What is Culture ...*

- **way** of life yet is a **worldview** of a particular group of people or individuals. Culture refers to the language, rituals, and traditions yet beliefs, values and perception impacting us outwardly and inwardly
- Culture is transmitted from generation to generation or individually learned...



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# *Cultural Perspectives*

***Culture shapes, affects, impacts us inwardly:***

Attitudes Values Beliefs Perceptions

***Culture determine outwardly:***

Behaviour Reactions Responses



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# *Cultural Perspectives*

## ***Attitudes are***

- Our likes and affinities and dislikes and aversions to certain people, objects or situations.
- Usually influenced by our cultural roots and our specific personal experiences.



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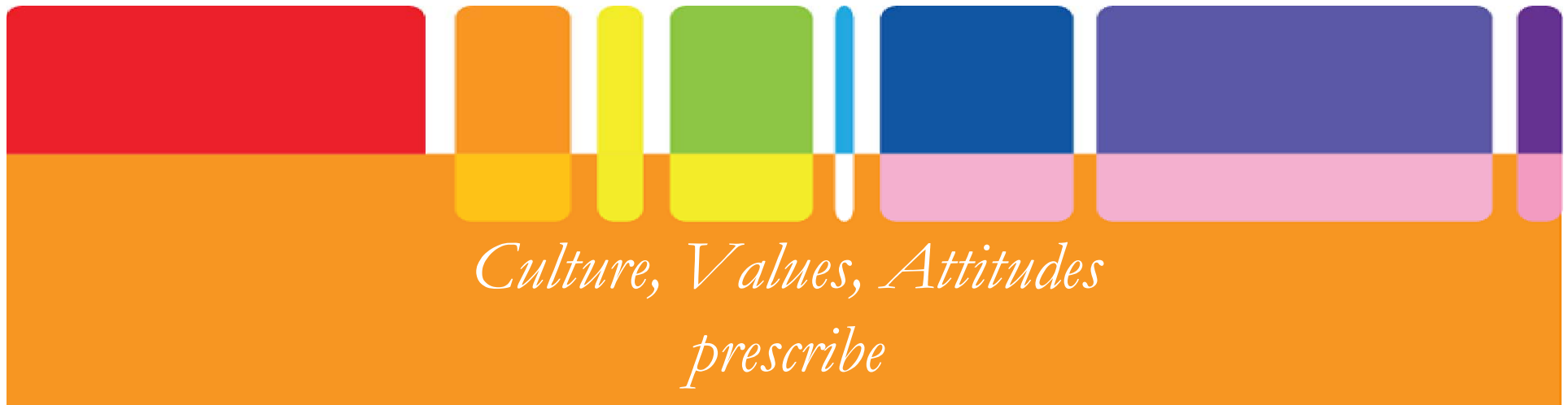




# *Cultural Perspectives*

***Values form the core of culture*** (Thiederman 1991)

- Values are social principles, goals or standards accepted by persons in that culture.
- What is proper and improper, what is normal and abnormal behaviour is determined by one's culture.



- **Social rituals: ways of addressing people eg managers; elderly**
- **Personal Space and time**
- **Expression of feelings and emotion**
- **Religious, spiritual and ethical rituals**
- **Celebrating special days**
- **Food preferences**
- **Gender roles**
- **Folk and traditional behaviours**



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# *Cultural Perspectives*

## 2006

- 49,000 people aged 65+ born in NES country
- (21% of total 65+ population)
- 1 in 4 of older CALD population aged 80+

## 2016

- 58,000 people aged 65+ born in NES country
- (20% of total 65+ population)
- 1 in 3 older CALD population aged 65+



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# *Cultural Perspectives*

- Dementia – “broad term used to describe a loss of memory, intellect, rationality, social skills and what would be considered as normal emotional reactions” (Alzheimer’s Australia 2010)



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# *Cultural Perspectives*

## **CALD understanding of Dementia**

- No word for dementia in some cultures
- Natural part of ageing
- Illness
- Harmless signs of ageing (early stage)
- Senile
- Private matter
- Associated with Mental illness/madness



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# *Cultural Perspectives*

## **CALD understanding of Dementia**

Yin Yang, God's will, Karma, Bad Luck, Shameful, fate, loss of face, embarrassment, (mild dementia ) natural part of ageing, stigma, taboo, fear; don't need to inform others, do not want to talk about it.

Why lack of awareness or knowledge about Dementia. CALD communities do not like discussing in public about something that is so personal



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# *Cultural Perspectives*

## **CALD Community attitudes and behaviour**

- Concern with embarrassment
- Withdrawal
- Concern about safety
- People do not want to know
- Don't mix with people with problem, might rub off
- Lack of engagement
- Family responsibility
- Private Business



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# *Cultural Perspectives*

## **CALD Client Barriers**

- Lack of knowledge about dementia
- Lack of knowledge about relevant services
- Rely on GPs
- Language barrier
- Attitude (influenced by culture)
- Behaviour (influenced by culture)
- Lack culturally appropriate services
- System barriers



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# *Cultural Perspectives*

## **Challenges for workers**

- Community attitudes and behaviours
- Identifying “hidden” Clients
- Communities interpretation of dementia
- Translated materials sometimes are too complex
- Cultural attitudes may have changed for some
- Intervention required only when in crisis
- Language barriers
- System barriers



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## *Recommendations*

- Better community education about dementia,
- Awareness of the importance of early intervention
- Awareness of the availability support services
- Education on dementia management strategies to assist client and family
- Link up with ethno specific services
- Bilingual workers
- CQ Cultural Awareness Training for workers



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*Cultural Intelligence Framework*

**Minding your Ps and Qs**

**Planning, Process and People  
Questions, Quandaries, Queries**



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# *Planning Process People and Questions*

## **Who and what it is for :**

Demographics, Statistics, Stories. Develop profiles on services, clients and communities

## **Ask for information:**

Mainstream communities migration history pattern and groups and individual stories needs and preferences

## **Include, speak to and reflect:**

The diversity in the workplace, in the community



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# *Resources*

- The MAC Library has a comprehensive collection of resources focussing on issues for aging and cultural diversity (cultural briefings, elder abuse, mental health), aged residential and community care, volunteers, translations, LOTE, general health and wellbeing, Diversional/Lifestyle therapy activities and leisure.
- Materials that are available for loan include, books, videos, training materials, CD's, DVD's, audio visual equipment, music, video kits, and over 50 journals and newsletters.



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**Multicultural Education, Training, Information, and Resources**

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**[www.mac.org.au](http://www.mac.org.au)**

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*Closure*

**QUESTIONS**



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