

PROMOTING THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) BACKGROUNDS

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)

In relation to the population, having a range of different cultural and language groups. Cultural and linguistic diversity may arise from place of birth, ethnicity, religion or language.

The concept of cultural safety is important for children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in promoting empowerment and safety.

Findings from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse inform us that a range of factors associated with being from a CALD background can contribute to the risk of harm and abuse to children and young people.

- Isolation which may be experienced by CALD children and young people may increase the risk of being targeted for abuse by perpetrators (within or outside of the community).
- Traditional approaches to discipline may compromise the safety of children and young people within a family context (e.g. physical punishment, deprivation).
- Lack of knowledge about acceptable behaviour within the Australian context can make it difficult for children and young people to identify inappropriate behaviour. Children and young people may feel they have no choice but to endure or accept inappropriate behaviour or practices (e.g. forced marriage, female genital mutilation).
- Lack of knowledge about sex and human development or taboos related to sexual behaviour or parts of the body, can impact a child or young person's understanding of behaviour that constitutes sexual abuse or their ability to let someone know if they are experiencing harm.
- The culture of silence associated with the guilt, shame or stigma of being a victim of abuse may prevent reporting (e.g. social exclusion, impact on future marriage prospects).
- Cultural practices.
- For CALD children and young people not knowing how the 'child protection system' works, the type of help that is available (e.g. counselling and where to go for help or report abuse) can mean that they are trapped in harmful situations.
- Hierarchical, patriarchal and/or religious structures may prevent seeking support or reporting abuse, when children and young people are not permitted to speak up.
- The mistrust of authorities based on experiences from their country of origin may also prevent children and young people from reporting to their authorities e.g. police in some countries may be corrupt, untrustworthy and may participate in causing harm.
- A reliance on the cultural community (e.g. financial, housing, employment), may prevent the reporting of abuse, as the family is afraid to jeopardise their social, housing or economic situation.
- Barriers to communication may prevent a children or young person (of their family) from reporting or getting support. Reliance on interpreters from the same cultural group or community may impact confidentiality in relation to reporting.

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Promoting Cultural Safety for Children and Young People from CALD Backgrounds

Parishes, agencies and entities can promote the cultural safety of children and young people from CALD backgrounds in the following ways:

- Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment (e.g. social events designed to welcome and share culture through food, stories and music).
- Demonstrating inclusion and a zero-tolerance in relation to discrimination by speaking up and challenging discrimination if you encounter it.
- Celebrating cultural diversity (e.g. acknowledge and celebrate cultural events).
- Celebrating mass or events in relevant community languages or in conjunction with English (e.g. conduct a bilingual mass in English and Italian, include prayers in other languages).
- Proactively seeking opportunities from members of diverse communities to participate or volunteer in parish activities.
- Connecting with CALD groups within the community and invite their participation (e.g. guest speakers, celebrations, choirs).
- Offering learning and information sharing opportunities for parishioners, clergy, employees and volunteers in relation to diverse cultures (e.g. guest speakers, ecumenical activities).
- Create physical environments that demonstrate acceptance and inclusion of diverse cultures through the display of artwork, posters, cultural symbols or objects.
- Provide information to families from CALD backgrounds to assist in developing their knowledge of services within the community (e.g. maternal and child health, parenting support, counselling, family violence support, the role of police).
- Translate relevant materials (e.g. newsletters, Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy).
- Actively seek and incorporate the voice of diverse communities in processes, activities and event held in our parish.
- Seek input from families about culturally appropriate ways to communicate child safety messages to children and young people.

Cultural Safety

Cultural safety is 'an environment that is safe for people: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening'.

Robyn Williams (quoted in CCYP n.d.)

Useful Resources

Within the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat there are vibrant ethnic communities that come together to celebrate their faith in culturally and linguistically diverse ways.

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