

# translinks

Newsletter of the Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre  
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Editor: Penny D'Ath

## Welcome

Welcome to the May edition of TRANSLINKS as we approach mid-year - what a busy year it has been so far! Following the opening of the new mental health unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in March this year, there was some reshuffling of service locations and QTMHC has moved to West End to co-locate with the MIST (Mobile Intensive Support and Treatment) team. We have settled very nicely into our new surroundings and it is wonderful to be in the traditional multicultural hub of Brisbane.

In this edition we highlight the BRiTA program (Building resilience in transcultural adolescents), as well as provide updates on our regular programs and services. We also feature an article on "Harmony Place", an organisation that we work with very closely and explain what they do. With June approaching, we are winding up our project which focused on the mental health needs of refugees on temporary protection visas. Although the dedicated resources that we had available to provide additional support to refugees on temporary protection visas are no longer available, we will continue to work with refugees on TPVs with mental health problems through our Transcultural Clinical Consultation Service, as we continue to benefit from the excellent partnerships that have been established between the participating organisations that were involved in this project. We particularly want to thank Simone Bell, Katayoon Haghseresht and Mohammed Yassine for their hard work and dedication on this project.

**Rita Prasad-Ildes**  
Manager

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**QTMHC Staff outside our new office in West End:**

*(from left, back row)* Michiko Lee, Toni Wilsdon, Katayoon Haghseresht, Kate Lemerle, Greg Turner

*(from left, front row)* Sirous Momenzadeh, Penny D'Ath, Rita Prasad-Ildes, Polly Nip.

*Absent:* Elvia Ramirez & Deb Mitchell.

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## Staff

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# Multicultural community development in mental health project

## by Deb Mitchell, Project Co-ordinator

The *Multicultural community development in mental health project* held its first cross-cultural community awareness seminar:

### *“An Iranian perspective of mental health and mental illness”*

The seminars are part of an on-going process whereby members of various ethnic communities present their views and issues regarding mental health and mental illness to staff of Queensland Health mental health services; and community mental health service providers. The forums provide an opportunity for mental health staff to discuss mental health issues with members of the participating ethnic communities and build relationships which will lead to the development of a participation mechanism between mental health services and ethnic communities.

Speakers from the Iranian Community were Dr Sirous Momenzadeh and Ms Mitra Khakbaz, who delighted the audience of 62 participants from various organisations with their cultural and mental health perspectives on this community. The presenters explored pre- and post-migration experiences of this community, historical and current data around use of mental health services and verbal and non-verbal patterns of communication. Case examples were used to illustrate how a client from this community would present to mainstream mental health services and various treatment modalities were discussed.



Mitra Khakbaz, Speaker



Dr Sirous Momenzadeh, Speaker

These were just a few of the areas the presenters covered during their presentation. The discussion ended with a question and answer session before all of the participants were treated to an Iranian feast.

The response to the seminar exceeded our expectations, and we take this enthusiasm into the next seminar which will be the *‘Spanish-speaking community’s perspective of mental health and mental illness’* which will occur sometime in late June. Hope to see you there!!!

## The Multicultural Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing ‘Harmony Place’

QTMHC and Harmony Place are often asked to explain the difference between our organisations, being the only two organisations in the multicultural sector dedicated exclusively to the mental health and wellbeing of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. As readers of TRANSLINKS would know, the QTMHC is a state-wide complementary service within Qld Health to provide assistance to district mental health services and other government and non-government organisations to support them in providing culturally appropriate mental health services to people of CALD backgrounds and we do this clinically through the clinical consultation service, through education and development, with information and resources, through policy development work, mental health promotion programs and through special projects focusing on particular issues.

Harmony Place, on the other hand, is a non-government service covering the geographic region of Brisbane and provides community and cultural support to people of CALD backgrounds with mental health problems. It has multicultural workers available who can provide direct non-clinical community support to people referred to their service. It runs a number of support groups and activities to provide support to people of CALD backgrounds with mental health problems and also conducts community education in various ethnic communities.

For further information please contact Gail Hyslop, Co-ordinator, Harmony Place, Ph. (07) 3891- 7911.

## District partnership project update

The Gold Coast District Mental Health Service has recently appointed its transcultural project officer, Bernarda Krmpotic, and we look forward to hearing about future developments in relation to transcultural mental health in the Gold Coast region.

In Logan, Karen has involved Greg Turner and Polly Nip over the past six months in providing in-service training for staff at team meetings and a large number of mental health staff have now received training in managing cultural diversity. As staff have shown a keen interest in receiving further training, a half day transcultural in-service, to be delivered by Greg Turner has been organised for the 23<sup>rd</sup> June. Karen and Greg have also delivered an information session to Logan Ethnic Aged and Disability Services on mental health disorders and referral processes to Logan-Beaudesert Mental Health Services.

A Multicultural Community Forum on Mental Health Issues was held at Multilinks Inc in May, 2004. The forum was an opportunity for representatives from local multicultural communities and organisations to meet with representatives from Logan-Beaudesert Mental Health Services and the Qld Transcultural Mental Health Centre. The forum discussed the key local issues in relation to mental health and what could be done to better meet the mental health needs of people locally.

An open day to be held on July 14<sup>th</sup> at Logan Mental Health Service will enable local ethnic communities and multicultural support agencies to visit the inpatient mental health service and be involved in the fortnightly group BBQ with staff and clients. For further information please contact:

Cairns: Mr Mark Millard Ph. 4050-3100

Logan: Ms Karen Grimley Ph. 3299-8772

Gold Coast: Ms Bernarda Krmpotic Ph. TBA

## Transcultural Clinical Consultation Service Update by Polly Nip, Clinical Services Co-ordinator

The TCCS has been very busy during the last three months, receiving almost double the referrals compared to last quarter.

In the last three months, the following people have joined our clinical program as sessional bilingual mental health consultants.

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Amy Chiu              | Chinese, psychology background  |
| Amy Wong              | Chinese, Social Worker and currently in Master of Psychology training |
| Adam Lo               | Chinese, Occupational Therapist                                       |
| Bernarda Krmpotic     | Croatian, Social Worker   |
| Rajendra Padhee       | Indian, Social Worker   |
| Dr. Vikram Goel       | Indian, Psychiatry Registrar  |
| Mohamed Abdi          | Somali, Social Science background                                     |
| Yeny Lima de Alzamora | Spanish, Social Worker  |
| Elizabeth Truong      | Vietnamese, Psychologist  |

On behalf of the Centre, I would like to welcome all of these new workers. Apart from the new bilingual workers, Ms Katayoon Haghseresht has also joined the TCCS as a part-time Clinical Worker. Welcome to Katayoon!

## Staff update

As we farewell Clifford Soo and thank him for his work in both the Transcultural Clinical Consultation Service and the mental health promotion program, we welcome back Elvia Ramirez from long service leave and Simone Bell from maternity leave.



# “BRiTA” project successfully builds coping skills in young people from culturally diverse backgrounds

by *Kate Lemerle, Research Project Co-ordinator*



The “BRiTA” Project, the first structured program anywhere in the world that targets culturally specific resilience enhancing factors, has just been completed by QTMHC. Evaluation of the pilot program was very successful, with 47 young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds learning new skills for coping with life’s challenges. Additional funding has now been received to further develop the program over the next two years.

## **Background to the project**

In response to the World Health Organization (WHO) prediction that rates of mental health problems could exceed heart disease and cancer as the major public health concerns within the next 20 years, QTMHC conducted a study of the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) adolescents in 2001. Results suggested that an approach that strengthens existing coping skills and builds environments that promote and support wellbeing, that is, promoting “resilience” protective factors, was needed. Existing resilience-promoting programs that recognise the role of culture within the context of mental health could not be found.

## **Rationale for the “BRiTA” program**

Resilience refers to a person’s capacity to “bounce back” or adapt successfully after negative life experiences, lifespan transitions, or difficult circumstances. The balance between risk factors (such as traumatic life events) and protective factors determines one’s levels of resilience and ultimately mental wellbeing and quality of life.

## **Development of the “BRiTA” program**

“BRiTA” is a set of 10 learning modules specifically designed to build resilience in young people from CALD backgrounds. Phase 1 of the project was conducted from February – December 2003, and involved the development of the program content based on an extensive review of other resilience programs, and the international literature. It also included development of appropriate evaluation tools and strategies and a training package for group facilitators.

Phase 1 had four key aims:

- ◆ To develop a 10-session group-based program with content specially designed to build resilience and health literacy in CALD young people through the use of culturally relevant learning activities;
- ◆ To develop evaluation methods and resources for measuring resiliency, depression, anxiety and acculturation stress in CALD adolescents;
- ◆ To conduct a training program for group facilitators working with CALD and refugee young people; and
- ◆ To develop a sustainable model for implementation of the program in school and community settings.



**Group facilitators training**

After a 2-day training program for group facilitators, the program was piloted with seven groups of young people in four sites (Townsville, Logan City, Gold Coast and Canberra). In total, 47 adolescents from CALD backgrounds, including nearly one third who had arrived as refugees, completed the full pilot program, which was delivered in several different formats including a series of weekly sessions, a 3-day camp, and weekend workshops. The program content included group activities designed to build skills for coping positively in a multicultural society, as well as providing opportunities for group discussion of the issues particularly relevant for CALD young people. Some examples include:

- ◆ How culture and life experiences shape personal identity;
- ◆ Managing the fallout from difficult life experiences;
- ◆ Learning how culture shapes habits of thinking and behaving;
- ◆ Ways to build personal optimism;
- ◆ Communicating to resolve conflict in difficult circumstances;
- ◆ Personal power and how to rebuild it;
- ◆ Values within families and communities; and
- ◆ Setting personal goals and life plans.

# “BRiTA” project cont.....

## **Key findings of “BRiTA” Phase 1 pilot**

Measurement of young people’s resilience risk and protective factors, symptoms of depression, anxiety, general stress, and acculturation stress, were collected using a self-report questionnaire before and after the program.

All seven resilience protective factors showed trends towards improvement, with changes in two of these – personal goal-setting and help-seeking behaviours – being statistically significant.

Participants’ connectedness with their school as well as their peer networks also improved. Acculturation stress, reflecting those personal and interpersonal difficulties unique to people who have experienced migration, decreased even though general stress increased. This finding confirms that the program content directly addresses those factors most relevant to these CALD young people, whilst also indicating that general awareness of symptoms and experiences of psychological distress, that might previously have been misunderstood, increased.

Participants as well as group facilitators completed feedback sheets at the end of each session. Their comments indicated good levels of acceptance by the young people participating in the program, with reports of significant improvements in health literacy (acquisition of understanding of mental health concepts as well as language to facilitate better communication); deeper appreciation of transcultural issues including health practices and traditions; increased awareness and understanding of how to deal with values conflict (intrapersonal as well as within families); improved confidence and stronger bonds within social networks; and increased help-seeking behaviours.



The importance of language and sensitivity to cultural issues, for example, lack of words to describe various mental health experiences across cultures, and use of appropriate activities within groups of mixed cultural backgrounds, have been emphasised in this program and clearly demonstrate the importance of not assuming generic-style health programs will suit all target groups. This feedback has been used to further refine the program content to ensure its relevance for use with young people from migrant and refugee populations.

## **Current priorities and future directions**

**Several new directions have emerged during the Phase 1 pilot of this program, including:**

- ◆ Funding through Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane City Council and Queensland Health to adapt the program content and structure for primary school-aged children and evaluate it within a *Health Promoting Schools* framework.
- ◆ Submission of a proposal currently being considered by the Commonwealth Government through Multicultural Mental Health Australia to support a national pilot and evaluation of the program.
- ◆ Grant received from the *School Based Youth Health Nurse Program* (Qld Health) for the development of self-directed learning packages for nurses working with CALD and refugee children and young people.
- ◆ Conference presentations including a recent poster display at the 18<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Health Promotion & Health Education in Melbourne, and next month at the Multicultural Families Conference at University of Sunshine Coast, as well as publication of the project outcomes in the *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*.

## What's on.....

### **23rd - 24th June 2004 - *Multicultural Families - Investing in the Nation's Future***

Venue: University of the Sunshine Coast, Sippy Downs, Maroochydore, Australia. For more information, Ph. (07) 3210-6194 or email: [mkhakbaz@usc.edu.au](mailto:mkhakbaz@usc.edu.au).

### **9th - 11th July 2004 - *5th International Mental Health Conference - Gold Coast - Mental health in older people***

Venue: Gold Coast International Hotel, Gold Coast, Australia. For more information, Ph. (07) 5577-3397 or email: [meetings@gcimh.com.au](mailto:meetings@gcimh.com.au).

### **2nd – 3rd August 2004 – *Perspectives on recovery Conference***

Venue: Wanganui River Gardens, Yeronga, Brisbane, Australia. For more information, Ph. (02) 6285-0111 or email: [secretariat@amhcn.com.au](mailto:secretariat@amhcn.com.au).

### **1st – 3rd September 2004 – *5th TheMHS & AICAFMHA Conference***

Venue: Gold Coast, Australia. For more information, Ph. (08) 8132-0786 or email: [secretary@aicafmha.net.au](mailto:secretary@aicafmha.net.au).

### **15th - 16th September 2004 - *10th Annual National Health Outcomes Conference - Health Outcomes 2004: Perspectives on Population Health***

Venue: Rydges Lakeside, Canberra, Australia. For more information, Ph. (02) 6205-0869 or email: [lorna.tilley@act.gov.au](mailto:lorna.tilley@act.gov.au).

### **15th – 17th September 2004 – *3rd World conference on the promotion of mental health and prevention and behavioural disorders***

Venue: Auckland, New Zealand. For more information, Ph. (09) 300 7010 4985 3165 or email: [conference@mentalhealth.org.nz](mailto:conference@mentalhealth.org.nz).

### **20th - 24th September 2004 - *ANZ College of Mental Health Nurses International 30th Conference - Mental Health Nursing: A changing landscape***

Venue: National Convention Centre, Canberra, Australia. For more information, Ph. (03) 9682-0244 or email: [anzcmhn2004@icms.com.au](mailto:anzcmhn2004@icms.com.au).

### **30th September - 3rd October 2004 - *47th Annual Scientific Convention - Celebrating diversity in general practice***

Venue: Grand Hyatt Hotel, Melbourne, Australia. For more information, Ph. (07) 3878-9242 or email: [yrd@tpg.com.au](mailto:yrd@tpg.com.au).

### **13th - 15th October 2004 - *AES Annual Conference - Diverse voices in evaluation***

Venue: Stamford Grand Hotel, Glenelg, Adelaide, Australia. For more information, Ph. (08) 8274-6060 or email: [aes2004@sapmea.asn.au](mailto:aes2004@sapmea.asn.au).

### **27th - 28th November 2004 - *Annual National Conference of the Mental Health Foundation of Australia***

Venue: University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. For more information, Ph. (02) 9427-0407 or email: [mentalh@mira.net](mailto:mentalh@mira.net).

## Transcultural applications of mental health outcome measures project

The project is now well underway and recently received ethical clearance from the Queensland Health Ethics Committee. The purpose of the project is to examine the impact of culture on completion of the HoNOS/65+ measures. Currently, the project is in its data collection phase where 200 matching pairs of mainstream mental health clinicians (MMHC) and bilingual mental health consultants (BMHC) HoNOS/65+ ratings with consumers from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds will be collected in Qld and NSW through the Transcultural Clinical Consultation Service (TCCS). The ratings completed by both groups will be compared to explore the impact of culture on the ratings. Clinicians will also be interviewed by the Project Co-ordinator in relation to the ratings and issues they may have encountered. The information collected from the personal interviews will be used to develop a questionnaire which will be completed by all MMHC and BMHC participating in the project. By gaining a better understanding of the impact of culture on clinician rated measures the project will develop training resources and/or guidelines to assist mental health workers with using the HoNOS with mental health consumers from CALD backgrounds.

For more information on the project, please contact Dr Sirous Momenzadeh on (07) 3240-2833.

# Transcultural issues in aged care mental health

by Greg Turner, Education & Development Co-ordinator

QTMHC has been funded by the Mental Health Unit to develop a best practice one-day Train-the-Trainer educational module on *Transcultural Issues in Aged Care Mental Health*. The module will compliment the existing *Managing Cultural Diversity in Mental Health* program currently consisting of eight one-day Train-the-Trainer programs and will become the ninth module of this program. It will also be able to be delivered directly (i.e. not as a Train-the-Trainer) via a four-hour workshop. Components of the module will also be able to be delivered as stand-alone education sessions of varying timeframes depending on the needs of the requesting service. The module, and components of the module will be available to all Queensland Health services throughout Queensland, and will also be made available to non-Queensland Health agencies at a nominal cost-recovery fee.

Assisting in the development of the course is a Reference Group, made up of relevant stakeholders and individuals with expertise in aged care mental health and transcultural mental health. The Reference Group will provide initial advice on the content of the course, and will then meet to monitor progress of the course development. Appropriately skilled contract writers will be engaged to write sections of the module under the direction of the QTMHC Education and Development Co-ordinator.

The development of this module is timely in that there is growing concern in regard to the mental health and wellbeing of the older population in Queensland, many of whom are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. According to the 2001 census, 11.7% of Queensland's population are aged 65 and over, and are projected to comprise 27.7% of the population in 2051. The number of persons aged 80 and over is projected to increase almost 600% over the next 50 years. Of Queensland residents that speak a language other than English at home, 14.2% were aged over 65.<sup>1</sup> Research has shown that within the aged population, the numbers of ethnic aged are experiencing a disproportionately large increase, with about a quarter of all elderly having been born overseas.<sup>2</sup>

Evidence shows that the prevalence of chronic nervous and mental disorders is stable for Australian-born after the age of 60 (approximately 16%), however among CALD migrants it increases from 14% at ages 60 to 64, up to 26% of those aged 75 years and over. At older ages there are considerably elevated risks of suicide for migrants compared to Australian born. Culturally and linguistically diverse migrant with poor English skills experience more psychological distress in old age than other groups of older Australians.<sup>3</sup>

Mental health services report that providing clinical services to CALD older persons is considerably more complex than it is for those born in Australia. This is often due to the older CALD patients regression back to their first language and/or culture of origin, different beliefs about mental illness, different expectations about how they should be treated, deteriorating family relationships, and a complex interplay between the ageing process, psychopathologies, culture and language.

This module will focus on equipping those who provide mental health services to older persons from CALD backgrounds with the knowledge and skills to provide optimal care to this population. Delivery of the module will assist Qld Health staff working in aged care mental health to meet Standard 3 of the National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce, which is as follows:

**Standard 3.** Mental health professionals practise in an appropriate manner through actively responding to the social, cultural, linguistic, spiritual and gender diversity of consumers and carers, incorporating those differences in their practice.

Delivery of the module will also:

- Enable aged care mental health services to be more responsive to the mental health needs of consumers and carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Contribute to a wider knowledge base in the area of transcultural aged care mental health.
- Enhance consumer and carer participation by individuals and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Aged Care Mental Health Services.

<sup>1</sup> Qld. Government Office of Economic & Statistical Research (December 2003). Census 2001 Bulletin No. 11, *Older Queenslanders*.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, G.M., Cartwright, C.M., Steinberg, M.A., and King, J.A. (1999) *A double jeopardy? NESB and Ageing*. Brisbane: The University of Queensland.

<sup>3</sup> McCallum, J. (1994). Immigrants, Ageing and Mental Health Promotion in Minas, I.H. & Hayes, C.L. (eds), *Migration and Mental Health: Responsibilities and Opportunities*. Melbourne: Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit.

For further information contact, Greg Turner via email: [greg\\_turner@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:greg_turner@health.qld.gov.au).



## QTMHC Library New Additions



### Books

-  Mears, J., Bolzan, N. and Voros, D. (2003) ***'The community hides such problems'. A model for dealing with abuse of older people in an ethnic community.*** Transcultural Mental Health Centre: NSW: 59. (ABUS.1)
-  Australian Institute of Health & Welfare. (2003) ***Aged care innovative pool dementia and disability pilot services evaluation.*** Australian Institute of Health & Welfare: Canberra: 91. (AGED.7)
-  British Red Cross. (2004) ***Emergency multilingual phrasebook.*** British Red Cross: London: 72. (EMER.2)
-  Bastian, K., Burgess, M., Ryder, D., Wright, B. and Kang, J. (2003) ***Guidelines and protocols for translated mental health resources.*** Department of Health, Western Australia: Perth: 58. (GUID.8)
-  TMHC Iranian Mental Health Sub-Committee. (2003) ***Mental health and service utilisation among the Iranian community in Metropolitan Sydney - The needs.*** Transcultural Mental Health Centre: Sydney: 24. (IRAN.1)
-  World Health Organisation. (2003) ***Mental health context. Mental health policy and service guidance package.*** World Health Organisation: Geneva: 46. (MENT.5)
-  World Health Organisation. (2003) ***Investing in mental health.*** World Health Organisation: Geneva: 50. (MENT.12)
-  Department of Immigration & Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs. (2003) ***The people of Australia: Statistics from the 2001 census.*** Commonwealth Government: Canberra: 71. (PEOP.1)

### Videos

- Storey, J., Rowland, J., Basic, D., Conforti, D. and Dickson, H. (2003) ***RUDAS: Rowland Universal Dementia Assessment Scale (A multicultural mini-mental state examination) Video guide to administration and scoring.*** Service, L.A.C.: Sydney. (english) (Vid072)

### CD Roms

- QPASTT. (2004) ***Looking after yourself: Hints & tips for survivors of torture & trauma.*** QPASTT: Brisbane. (CD008)

**If you would like to borrow any of the above books or  
use the Resource Library  
please contact  
Penny D'Ath on (07) 3240-2833.**

### QTMHC on the Web!

The QTMHC website, previously only accessible to Queensland Health staff through the Queensland Health intranet, is now able to be accessed by everyone as it is now on the Queensland Health internet site. Apart from multilingual mental health resources, the website also contains other useful downloadable information such as QTMHC resources and publications.

[www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/mentalhealth/](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/mentalhealth/)