



**ethnic
communities'
council of
victoria**

ECCV Review of
Culturally Responsive Elder Abuse
Prevention Forums
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Submission to the Office of Senior Victorians

Statewide Resources Centre
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Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) is a broadly based, state-wide peak advocacy body representing ethnic and multicultural communities across Victoria since 1974. For over 35 years, ECCV has remained the principal liaison point between ethnic communities, government and the wider community in Victoria. ECCV has been a key player in building Victoria as a successful, harmonious and multicultural society today. In particular, ECCV advocates for improved access and equity for aged care in ethnic communities.

1. Background

In 2009 the ECCV Aged Care Policy Committee formed the Elder Abuse Working Group with representatives from ethnic and multicultural agencies.

ECCV subsequently produced the Discussion Paper: *Reclaiming Respect and Dignity - Elder Abuse Prevention in Ethnic Communities (2009)* following extensive consultation with ethnic aged care stakeholders. Recommendations included:

- ◆ Culturally responsive elder abuse training and resources for aged care service providers
- ◆ Elder abuse prevention training and capacity building in the multicultural community sector
- ◆ Elder abuse prevention and rights awareness education for seniors in ethnic communities

In addition ECCV welcomed the opportunity for extensive consultation with the Office of Senior Victorians (OSV) of the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) on elder abuse prevention issues related to the multicultural community.

In 2009 the OSV funded ECCV to conduct six community education forums on culturally responsive elder abuse prevention.

2. Recommendations

Several recommendations emerged from the *Culturally Responsive Elder Abuse Prevention Forums Project* coordinated by ECCV as follows:

That the Victorian Government's Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy:

1. Ensures that equity of care for elder abuse prevention in ethnic communities and culturally responsive service provider training is regulated and adequately funded
2. Engages the expertise of ethnic agencies to further develop culturally responsive modules for elder abuse prevention
3. Builds on the forum partnerships and complementary expertise of participating ethnic agencies
4. Provides funding to facilitate further opportunities for ethnic agencies to work with SRV
5. Accesses promotional network opportunities in the ethnic and multicultural community sector
6. Ensures that culturally responsive elder abuse prevention training forums are included in the HACC Training Calendar on a regular and on-going basis

3. Forum Project Overview

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV), through its Aged Care Policy Committee and the Elder Abuse Working Group sub-committee, was the auspice body for resource allocation from the Office of Senior Victorians (OSV) for the forum project.

Six *Culturally Responsive Elder Abuse Prevention* community education sessions were jointly conducted in partnership with ECCV, ethnic agencies, multicultural organisations, and with the support of Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) in metropolitan areas and regional and rural Victoria from October 2009 to June 2010.

ECCV acted as the coordinating agency. The participating agencies that conducted the forums were the Australian Greek Welfare Society (AGWS) and the Australian Polish Community Services (APCS) in close collaboration with SRV.

3.1 Aim

The forums aimed to present strategies and resources for identifying and responding to suspected elder abuse in ethnic communities in line with the empowerment model and existing resources developed by the Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy.

3.2 Locations

Five forums were conducted from April to June 2010 in the eastern, southern, northern and western Melbourne metropolitan regions and Ballarat. ECCV arranged two forums through its rural and regional Ethnic Communities' Councils (ECCs) and multicultural representatives: the initial forum was hosted by the multicultural representative of the Regional Information and Advocacy Council (RIAC) in Shepparton, in October 2009 and another in June 2010 by the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC). An interim report on the Shepparton forum was submitted to the OSV in May 2010.

3.3 Target audience

The target audience of the forums was aged care workers, managers, policy makers, and multicultural and ethnic agencies. A broad audience of mainstream service providers registered. As many as 80 people attended in regional Victoria and over 200 participants attended in metropolitan Melbourne.

3.4 Contents

Seniors Rights Victoria presented general information about elder abuse prevention. The culturally responsive training components consisted of culturally diverse case studies; in depth discussion of culturally sensitive responses to suspected elder abuse; and a range of practical cultural competency resources.

Handouts provided at the forums included:

- ◆ Information sheet about the Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy
- ◆ "Rights. Respect. Trust." Seniors Fact Sheet May 2009
- ◆ "Rights. Respect. Trust." Victorian Government Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy Booklet
- ◆ Seniors Rights Victoria Postcard

Other resources recommended were:

- ◆ Two translated factsheets on elder abuse prevention and definitions produced by the OSV and additional resources accessible at the ECCV website www.eccv.org.au
- ◆ "With respect to age – 2009" - Victorian Government practice guidelines for health services and community agencies for the prevention of elder abuse
- ◆ Cultural competency websites

3.5 Actual participants

A high demand for culturally responsive forums on elder abuse prevention in Victoria was demonstrated by the large numbers that attended and the distances people were prepared to travel. A cumulative total of 288 registered and 270 participants attended the forums. In 2010 about 250 people responded to a single promotional flyer distributed via the ECCV stakeholder promotional networks and the OSV.

Forum attendees represented the health and aged care sector, HACC providers, HACC assessors, HACC Cultural Diversity Officers, ethnic community agencies, migrant resource centres, CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) Liaison Officers, local councils, aged care case managers, government departments, allied health agencies, justice organisations, police officers, residential aged care facilities, Centrelink, universities, community peak organisations as well as a broad range of regional health and community organisations.

A number of participants that attended the metropolitan forums came from the regional Peninsula area, Geelong, Gippsland and Wangaratta, and even travelled across metropolitan areas. ECCV received further requests to hold forums at Ballarat, Wangaratta, Wodonga, Mildura and in Gippsland; however that was beyond the scope of the project.

3.6 Review

Each forum was reviewed through evaluation surveys (see Appendix – Survey Results) filled out by participants and further developed to respond to the participants' needs and feedback. A large number of people attended from the mainstream community sector and many participants found the sessions as a valuable introduction to cultural responsive strategies and diversity thinking. It soon became clear that there is a huge need for further cultural diversity training in relation to elder abuse prevention in the aged care, health and related community sectors.

4. Forum Outcomes

4.1 Partnerships model

Effective working partnerships and pooling of resources developed throughout the planning and delivery of the forums between four separate organisations. Mutual cooperation and partnerships of equal trust and responsibility developed between ECCV, the AGWS, APCS and SRV. ECCV provided access to promotional networks in ethnic aged care whilst AGWS and APCS had the practical knowledge and skills in the areas of cultural proficiency, ethnic aged care, elder abuse prevention strategies in ethnic communities, and the delivery of community education programs. Their presentations complemented those of the legal and advocacy services of SRV.

In addition extensive partnerships were developed with rural and regional multicultural organisations which themselves proved to be effective coordinating organisations in their areas with well established trusted networks.

4.2 Capacity building of ethnic organisations

The coordinating work of ECCV in arranging the forums highlighted the skills and knowledge of expert presenters within its Elder Abuse Working Group. The two larger ethnic organisations, AGWS and APCS, demonstrated their capacity to act as lead agencies and cultural diversity specialists in the aged care sector and in particular, in elder abuse prevention.

The forum presenters representing the ethnic sector, specifically AGWS and APCS, had relevant qualifications and experience. Their cumulative expertise and experience consisted of social work, counseling, domestic violence, elder abuse advocacy, adult education, Workplace Assessment and Training accreditation, alcohol and drugs counseling, community development, family therapy, bilingualism, biculturalism and cultural competence.

Strong working partnerships were developed with SRV signalling good prospects for further cooperation and development of strategies to address elder abuse prevention ethnic communities.

The effectiveness of extensive ECCV promotional networks for reaching multicultural aged care providers and other community organisations with an interest in ethnic aged care was demonstrated by the high rate of responses to the forum flyer. These networks, including ethnic radio, provide valuable access potential for future promotions of culturally responsive training programs.

4.3 Resource allocation

The Victorian Government funding support for this series of forums provided a valuable opportunity to:

- ◆ engage service providers in culturally responsive issues
- ◆ demonstrate the capacity of the ethnic sector

The project funding was however a limited allocation with unreasonable expectations in terms the work load required. For example the development of partnerships across agencies and regions, arranging venues, catering, promotions, planning the content, reviewing survey feedback and continuous improvement of forum delivery required considerable coordination, time and effort.

It has become evident that culturally responsive community education in relation to elder abuse prevention is in its embryonic stages. There is a large demand that requires further resource allocation which should tap into the cultural expertise within the ethnic sector.

4.4 Further cultural responsiveness training

There is a need for the development of further training modules for service providers that focus on culturally responsive elder abuse prevention. Feedback from the participants and presenters indicated that these forums have only touched the tip of the iceberg. It became evident that the

forums were seen as introductory sessions. They generated interest and enthusiasm for more culturally responsive training to assist service providers identify triggers and signs of suspected elder abuse and gain strategies for responding with a 'multicultural lens'.

Issues and service gaps regarding the vulnerability of seniors with culturally diverse backgrounds were repeatedly discussed. For example seniors in ethnic communities choose to live at home longer than the average population of Australian born older people. Intergenerational living and economic pressures on families, along with lack of access to information, may place ethnic seniors at risk of abuse. There is still an unmet need for financial abuse awareness sessions targeted at seniors with culturally diverse backgrounds.

Many participants, as well as other organisations that read the forum flyer, requested further training in the area of responding culturally appropriately and sensitively to elder abuse in ethnic communities.

5. Appendix

5.1 Survey Results of Forums in 2010

Participant surveys were collected at each of the six *Culturally Responsive Elder Abuse Prevention Forums* held in four metropolitan areas of Melbourne and Ballarat from April to June 2010. Overall participants made positive comments about the content and delivery of the forums. The results were collated and summarised as follows:

Participants indicated the major benefits they gained from the forum were:

- Increased knowledge and awareness of elder abuse
- Increased awareness of elder abuse in relation to culturally diverse communities
- Improved understanding of problems related to elder abuse in ethnic communities
- Increased knowledge of legislation
- A better understanding of the role of support agencies related to elder abuse prevention

Participants reported that useful aspects of the forum were:

- Working through practical case scenarios to highlight strategies
- Actual case studies with a culturally diverse focus and outcomes
- Clear and concise information
- A half-day forum is ideal

Positive participant comments indicated they gained:

- Good resources
- Printed material to share with work colleagues

After attending the forum participants felt they were able to:

- Access support for those effected by elder abuse in ethnic communities
- Review their policies and procedures in relation to culturally competent elder abuse prevention

Comments of dissatisfaction in early sessions included:

- Venue too cold
- Wanted to hear more on cultural competency
- Would like more on policy development

Typical comments about future sessions were:

- More training on culturally responsive awareness and strategies
- More information about specific ethnic groups
- More culturally responsive resources
- More work on culturally responsive policy development

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