

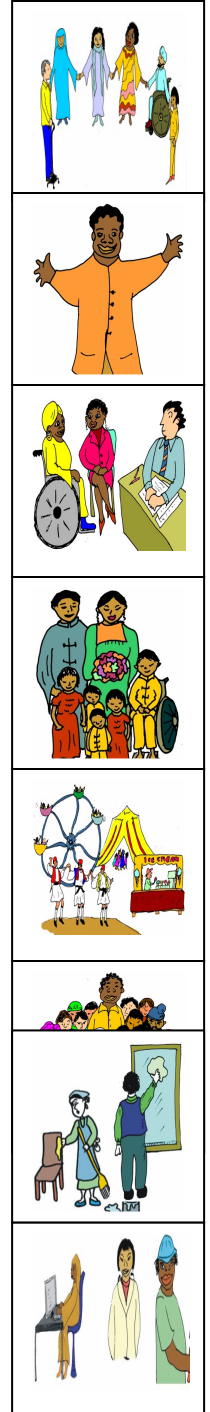
CaLD Perspectives on the Disability Services Standards Consumer Version

An Easy English and Pictorial Version

PROJECT REPORT

MAY 2008

Disability Services Commission
Quality Systems Improvement Grant



Acknowledgements

The Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre (EDAC) would like to thank Dolly Bhargava, speech pathologist specializing in augmentative communication, and Harry Pickett consultant psychologist for the development of this resource manual.

They were assisted by EDAC staff members and we gratefully acknowledge their support and contribution.

EDAC would like to thank the Disability Services Commission for a Quality Systems Improvement Grant for this project. We hope this resource will be useful for many disability agencies who are interested in enhancing service delivery to disabled consumers who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, especially those with communication difficulties.

We are grateful for the input and directions of CaLD consumers and carers/families themselves. Those who participated expressed the strong belief that all aspects of all of the nine Disability Services Standards should be considered from diverse cultural perspectives. They also agreed that consumers should have greater understanding of the Disability Services Standards so that they can play an informed and active role in the development, delivery and evaluation of services.

EDAC acknowledges the use of a software program *Softpics with Fantasticpics* and thank the graphic designer for modifying images to portray diverse cultural backgrounds and disability.

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INTRODUCTION

Complex communication needs. Many resources are available to provide accessibility of information for people who are blind or visually impaired, those who are deaf or hard of hearing, or individuals who have other physical disabilities. But for people with complex communication needs, such as those with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, there are not many resources. There are no simple solutions, as the needs of this group are widely variant, highly specific, and need to be addressed individually

This is especially so when these people are also from culturally diverse backgrounds. With additional cultural and language barriers the method of information delivery is more complex.

CaLD people with disabilities, in our work with them on the Disability Services Standards in particular, have suggested that there would be considerable value in having a generalised resource that was culture-friendly and based on assisted communication strategies, that:

- ✓ can provide information access, at a basic level, by CaLD people with disabilities who may have any of various types and levels of communication difficulty,
- ✓ can also be used as a tool by service providers, flexibly and creatively in ways appropriate to the diversity of individual cases,
 - ✓ to facilitate otherwise difficult communication, and
 - ✓ to enhance the level of communication that is otherwise available.

Envisaged was a practical resource, developed from the *CaLD Perspectives on the Disability Services Standards*, to help providing information to, and working with, CaLD people with disabilities who have language/communication difficulties.

It can be difficult for CaLD people with disabilities involving communication difficulties to access information for a number of reasons:

- information may be presented in complex ways
- the amount of information may make it difficult to identify relevant items
- information technology and user skills may limit access
- presentation may only be in written form

and

- information may not connect meaningfully with different cultural values, lifestyles and concepts
- information may not be translated into cultural languages and readily available.

EDAC already developed the *CaLD Perspectives on the Disability Services Standards* in 2004 through working with CaLD consumers with disabilities. The initial version was designed for professionals and consumers and their families/carers who have standard English language skills. It has always been the intention of EDAC to provide an

accompanying simple English and graphics version for consumers who are from culturally diverse backgrounds and have learning difficulties and complex communication needs.

With the Disability Services Standards provided in clear, simple English and in a culture-friendly and accessible format, most CaLD consumers with a disability, especially those with intellectual disability, will be able to better articulate their needs, negotiate assistance, and understand their rights with regard to disability services.

AIM

The aim of the project was to develop a resource manual that contained a simplified version of the nine Disability Service Standards, informed by the *CaLD Perspectives on the Disability Services Standards*. A simple English text was to be supported with pictures in an accessible format. Its purpose was to make key information for individuals with disabilities who are from a CALD background, and who have complex communication needs, available and easier to understand. This resource would be developed on a CD or DVD and made available for consumers, families and organisations.

METHOD AND OUTCOMES

The project was completed by EDAC in 2007 in collaboration with a speech pathologist who specialised in augmentative and alternative communication. It was completed in four stages:

Stage 1 – Consultation

EDAC organised and facilitated forums and discussions from January to July 2007, with consumers, families/carers and service providers by drawing on its own consumer and carer reference groups and through its extensive network of connections with multicultural and disability services organisations.

The information obtained identified the key needs of service users and family members/carers in terms of improving information and service access and understanding and participating meaningfully in the process of service provision. The consultations also obtained information on the difficulties experienced by service providers and their ideas regarding service improvement to the target population.

Among those consulted were consumers and/or staff of the ACTIV Foundation, Muslim Carers Group, Women With Disabilities, and DSC, as well as EDAC's individual and systemic advocacy staff and consumer reference group. The diversity of consumers consulted included people with a wide range of disabilities, and a variety of communication difficulties were represented, including those with intellectual disabilities (attending with their carers). Similarly represented were a wide range of cultures and length of time in Australia: such as, for example, African (Somalia, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Ethiopia), Chinese (Malaysia and Singapore), South East Asian (Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam), Indian and Sri Lankan, Eastern European (Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonian), Middle Eastern (Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Egypt) as well as Italian,

Greek and Spanish. Interpreting support was provided where required. Overall, there was a reasonable balance of ages and gender.

The outcomes of these consultations were as follows, and guided the subsequent design of the resource manual.

Design considerations

From the issues that CaLD people with disabilities experienced, and those of service providers, together we concluded that Disability Services Standards information, as well as being culturally appropriate as in the *CaLD Perspectives*, also needs to be:

- ✓ presented in ways that are simple, uncluttered, organised with clear navigation pathways and have inbuilt strategies for ease of targeted use;
- ✓ multi-modal - expressed in different modes (such as written, graphic and lend itself to active interaction) - to facilitate access, understanding, active use, retention and retrieval;
- ✓ able to be individualised - presented in flexible ways that are responsive to the communication channels favoured by the person with disability and their levels of capability;
- ✓ carefully selected to be targeted, relevant, appropriate and engaging - necessitating only a limited amount of quality information;
- ✓ presented appropriately through contemporary communication media and technological formats, such as a combination of simple English and graphics, accessible via CD/DVD.
- ✓ suitable for ease of supported use - by service providers with clients and carers/families to enable and enhance effective communication - as well as independently accessible.

Project principles

From this, the practical requirements that must underpin the development of the augmented communication aspect of the manual were summarised as:

- **responsive** to the actual information needs of the target audience;
- **inclusive** in addressing a range of communication needs;
- **engaging** to the target audience, so that they are motivated to use the materials and heed its messages;
- **participative** in its processes of development, so that all stakeholders, particularly the primary target audience of CaLD people with disability and communication difficulties, are able to contribute to and inform design;
- **physically usable** - portable, in formats that are easily handled and operated, clearly packaged and branded; and

- **logical and transparent** in its application, that is, accompanied by clear process for individual consumer use and/or supported use together with service providers and family/carers.

Stage 2 – Development of materials

The content and form of the resource was essentially determined by Stage 1 of the project. A draft manual was developed from July to August 2007. Initial images were sourced from a picture software program called *Softpics with Fantasticpics* which is used internationally and in a range of augmentative communication materials in Australia. Other images were specifically drawn and those sourced were specially modified by the project artist to make them culture-friendly reflecting the multicultural diversity in Australia.

Stage 3 – Testing and revising

EDAC organised a follow up forum in late August 2007 with the above participants and with the consumers and carers who had been involved in the development of the earlier professional version of the *CaLD Perspectives on the Disability Services Standards* in 2006.

They reviewed the draft manual providing constructive critique relative to their informed knowledge of the Disability Services Standards, their own experiences with access to disability information and services, and against the design criteria and principles developed earlier in this project from sector consultation. This including assessing the manual's usefulness, usability, and ease of understanding. Importantly they also provided valuable guidance on the appropriateness and acceptability of all of the images in terms of cultural sensitivity and received meaning. Their feedback and ideas were incorporated into a final colour version.

The final version accompanies this Report (print copy and CD - in colour).

Stage 4 – Dissemination

Promoting it online

EDAC has placed samples of the resource manual on it's website so that it can be readily accessed.

Availability on CD

A full copy of this resource on CD can be purchased from EDAC. Purchasers are free to produce print copies as they require and utilise at their discretion. Included with the CD is a copy of the picture software program (*Softpics with Fantasticpics*) so any users can customise it to their own particular needs and/or those of their clients.

Professional reporting and promoting to the disability sector

The project process and outcomes were presented in Powerpoint format and discussion at a **DSC Quality Forum**. The project and resulting manual was well received and some orders were made for copies of the CD.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Promotion

As well as presentation at the DSC Quality Forum and already posting promotional material from the manual on the EDAC website, the resource manual and its availability will be further promoted to organisations throughout the disability services sector and to CaLD consumers and their families/carers and communities - through interview with project staff and participants on EDAC's *EthnicAbility* radio program on 6EBA (95.3 FM). The transcript of the interview will also be available on the EDAC website for those interested in further information and discussion on its development and potential for use.

EDAC's promotional displays at conferences and forums and public/community events will include information about the resource manual and staff will be on hand to answer any queries and respond to expressions of interest.

EDAC Newsletters and the EDAC Annual Report will also carry description of the resource manual and information on its intended use and availability.

User Feedback and Revision

EDAC will seek feedback from users, on a continuing basis, to facilitate further experience-based development of the resource manual. For this purpose, a feedback sheet has been attached to the resource manual and users encouraged in this way to contribute the benefit of their practical experience to maintain it as a continually improving *best practice* instrument.

Recommendation

That DSC prints copies of the Resource Manual for distribution to all funded service providers.

FEEDBACK SHEET

EDAC encourages you to contribute the benefit of your practical experience in using this resource manual to help us to maintain it as a continually improving *best practice* instrument.

Some useful considerations would be -

✓ does the manual contain the information you/client required

✓ was the information easily accessible

✓ did the information lead to ease of understanding

✓ did the layout facilitate the process of informing and working with the client

✓ did it inform/enhance awareness of the Disability Services Standards

✓ how relevant and usable was it for you/client with that particular disability

✓ how user-friendly was it for you/client from that particular culture

✓ how adequately did it help with your/client's particular communication support needs.

Any comments and useful suggestions we will gladly receive and appreciate the opportunity to include those considerations in our next update and revision of the resource manual.

Please return your feedback to EDAC at 320 Rokeby Road, Subiaco WA 6008 or email to admin@edac.org.au