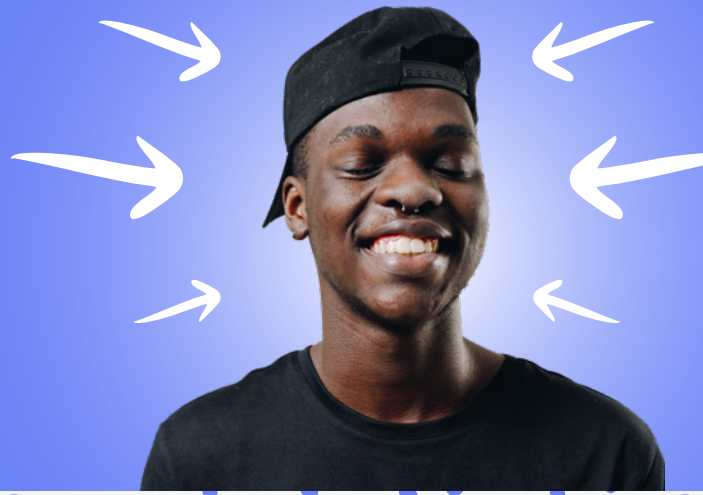


# FACTSHEET

Navigating sexual health promotion with culturally diverse young people



Engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) young people around the topic of sexual health poses unique understandings.

CALD communities in Australia encompass over 200 different language groups. This means that what may be appropriate for one person or community may not be appropriate for another. Sexual health can also be a very sensitive topic in many different cultures. The following tips may assist you when working with CALD young people around the topic of sexual health.

**Cultural**

**information  
AND support**



- **Do not make assumptions based on cultural stereotypes**

Use simplified language when discussing sexual health. Some young people from CALD backgrounds may be experts in all things sexual health while others may not have had much experience in learning about sexual health as it can be a taboo topic in some families and cultures. It is important not to make assumptions about a young person's level of knowledge or comfort when talking about these topics.

- **Engage with the parents of young people where appropriate**

Sexual health programs work best when they are delivered with a whole of community approach. It can be a good idea to engage with parents when teaching young people about sexual health. You may choose to send a letter to parents outlining what their young person is learning and why. This gives them the opportunity to continue discussions about home and contribute to ongoing learning.

- **Sexual health information is important**

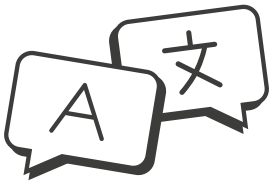
All young people have a right to education and information about their bodies, their health and relationships. It is important to take care not to offend community members when talking about sexual health, however, you also have a responsibility to provide evidence-based sexual health information. Do this by communicating clearly and respectfully. You can also ensure that your service is culturally safe by including culturally appropriate, translated, easy-to-understand resources.

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## Cultural information AND support



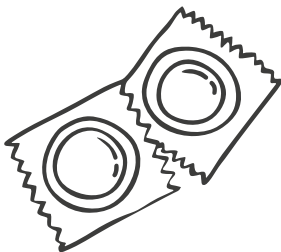
- **Local multicultural health workers or CALD services are there to assist**

Connect with local multicultural health workers or CALD services for guidance on specific cultural issues related to sexual health. You can talk to [Family Planning NSW](#) or the [Multicultural HIV & Hepatitis Service](#) for advice and guidance.

- **Consider if you need support from community leaders**

Engaging with some communities, for example religious groups, can be particularly challenging when it comes to the topic of sexual health. You may need support and approval from community leaders to access these groups. Take care when choosing educational material and focus on material that has a strong evidence-based and clearly links to positive health outcomes.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND cultural expectations



- **You may need to clarify what 'confidentiality' means**

Some CALD young people may not be familiar with the concept of confidentiality in health care. You may need to explain this before they feel comfortable talking about sexual health. It is important young people are aware of their health care rights and the right to private and confidential health information.

- **Being from a different cultural background can also make conversations easier**

Some CALD young people will be more comfortable that confidentiality exists when the facilitator is from a different cultural background. Seek advice from the community you are working with.

- **Be aware some people have experienced trauma and have not used sexual health services or sought information about sexual health before**

Newly arrived young people may have experienced or been exposed to sexual violence and other trauma. Other young people may have had limited access to information about sexual health, relationships and consent. It is important to ensure any discussions around sexual health are trauma informed. Check out [Play Safe Pro's Trauma Informed Care Booklet](#) for more information.

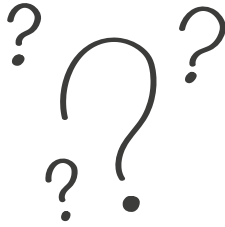
# FACTSHEET

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## Running information

### sessions



- **You do not need to use 'sexual health' in the session or resource title**

Sexual health can be a sensitive topic. Consider promoting any information sessions as a 'men's/women's event' or a 'health event' rather than a 'sexual health' information session or resource. You could also focus on education around relationships and link important concepts of sexual health into related education in a gentle and sensitive way. For example, how to have healthy and safe relationships.

- **Consider using separate male and female facilitators**

In some cultures it can be inappropriate to discuss sex and relationships in a mixed gender environment. Discuss with the young people and wider community you are working with on their preference.

- **Visual activities, storytelling, diagrams and interactive activities are useful**

English literacy may be a challenge for CALD young people if English is not their first language. You can use professional interpreters to ensure clear communication for the young people you work with. Prioritise using storytelling, activities, diagrams, images and interactive activities to support learning and use translated materials where possible.

## Points to remember about

### PARTICIPATION

- **Never push people to participate if they feel uncomfortable**

Some young people may feel shame about their sexual health or sexuality. The topic may generate family conflict or community repercussions.

- **Some people may have difficulty expressing their gender or sexuality**

In some countries and cultures it is illegal to be gender or sexually diverse and may result in severe punishment or incarceration. Some young people may fear social, family or legal repercussions.

# FACTSHEET

Navigating sexual health promotion  
with culturally diverse young people



## Resources

For more sexual health resources for culturally  
and linguistically diverse young people, see:



**SHINE SA Multicultural Communities**

[shinesa.org.au/community-information/working-with-multicultural-communities/](https://shinesa.org.au/community-information/working-with-multicultural-communities/)



**Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Services**

<https://mhahs.org.au/index.php/en/>



**International Student Health Hub**

<https://internationalstudents.health.nsw.gov.au/>



**Sexual Health Infolink**

<https://www.shil.nsw.gov.au/>



**Your Cultural Lense, WA:**

A training resource in cross-cultural communication for sexual health and blood-borne viruses

<https://ycl.health.wa.gov.au/>

Thank you to the NSW Multicultural HIV & Hepatitis Service for their support to develop this factsheet.