



# Engaging CALD Carers & Communities

## CALD Carer Issues in Person Centred Care

This resource is part of a series of resources in the online Diversity in Disability Toolkit.

For further information, see:  
[diversityindisability.org](http://diversityindisability.org)

## What will this resource cover?

The role of family carers has been well documented in this tool set. One of the critical future issues for service providers will be in understanding and working with CALD family carers to be able to both realise and provide client benefits from client directed care (CDC).

This tool will focus on two specific areas: the first will be how to facilitate the decisions making relevant to CDC through carers and the second will be working with family members as interpreters.

## Negotiating carer roles in decision making

Shared care arrangements for CALD people with disability can sometimes pose particular issues in decision making situations within the care relationship. Service providers need to be both aware and skilled in dealing with situations on which decision making involves more than one carer or family support person. These can include situations where:

- care planning and key decision making involves more than one person. In some families these occasions might warrant the involvement of one or more family members with either English skills or better systems knowledge to participate in care decisions;
- 
- the person with disability fully delegates their decision making to one or more family carers;
- 
- where there are differences of opinion between individuals in the shared care arrangement;

In each of these scenarios services providers need to ensure that the client is cognizant of the situation and that they are active participants in care or service decisions or have clearly delegated this responsibility.

Where there is a clear delegation the service provider needs to both respect the arrangement as part of the CDC imperative and continue to work with the delegated carer.

## Negotiating and managing carer roles in client communication

CALD caring can and most probably will involve dealing with an English speaking family member carer in client interactions.

This is a valuable role as the family carer who provides this function is often the person who also takes the responsibility of receiving and accessing service information, considering this information and providing the interpreted information and advice to the client in situations where they do not speak English.

The following approaches need to be considered to get the best out of this relationship:

- Identify the person in the shared care arrangement who takes the responsibility to broker information and provide the information to the client. This may in fact be more than one person and this information relationship should be noted in the case files.
- Consider their information needs and indeed if they process the information in English, their capacity to fully access this information, and understand it to a competent level.
- Always seek to provide this information in a bilingual format with the level of support being commensurate with the person, level of both English and their first language. This can be achieved by asking the following questions:
  - In what language would you prefer information?
  - Would you prefer the information verbally or in written form?

- If written would you prefer the information to be in both English and your other language?
- Use effective cross cultural communication skills to assure yourself that the family carer understands the service information and the rights the clients has in directed their own care.
- Develop and use more general CDC related information in bilingual formats to describe what CDC is about, what it seeks to achieve, the rights and responsibilities that it provides clients. This piece should also provide a broad based set of information about what could be part of a service plan for the type of disability.

## A Note on Family Carers as Interpreters

The carer relationships being described in this tool set are important and enduring ones. Clearly part of the family carer's role as information broker is to act as an interpreter. It is important to understand the limits of this role and the need to ensure that both the service provider and the client are confident with and well served by the interpreting being rendered.

The following considerations need to be kept in mind when a family member presents as an interpreter:

- A family member as an interpreter may be a valuable resource in ensuring that the client is comfortable in interacting with a service provider from another language or culture;
- A family member as interpreter should not reassure you that the client both fully understands and is actively participating in determining the care plan;

- Service providers need to practice good cross cultural skills to determine the nature of the information relationship and to assess whether the client is allowed to participate in the interaction to a satisfactory level;
- Family carers need to be informed about their responsibilities when acting as the information conduit. These responsibilities would include:
  - Ensuring that they have the adequate skills in both languages to convey all necessary information;
  - Understanding their role as information broker even if they are part of the decision making process;
  - Ensuring that the client is kept aware and involved in the communication
  - Understanding the service providers responsibility to be confident that the client understands the interaction and in this may use professional interpreters either on the phone or face-to-face
- Where there is any suggestion that the client is being excluded or in situations where the service provider needs assurance that the client understands and supports the care decisions, **professional interpreters should be used.**

## Case Study/Scenario

Benjamin Tang is a 50 year old man who has an acquired brain injury. He has been assessed as needing a high level of occupational therapy. When the assessment team comes to Benjamin Tang's house they are met by Benjamin, his wife Lucy, adult daughter Alice and adult cousin Sam. The interview and assessment is quite problematic. There are obvious issues between the daughter and cousin. Both Benjamin and Lucy remain silent in the interaction. Alice's English is more developed than her cousin's but Sam appears to have greater authority and overrides Lucy in the discussions.

## Key Questions

How would you approach this situation?

How would you ensure that Benjamin was included in the discussion?

How would you approach Lucy and Sam in terms of establishing appropriate roles and responsibilities in the discussion?

If conflict and a lack of resolution were to continue what would you do to assure yourself that Benjamin's needs and wants were being voiced and reflected?



### Copyright Notice