RQ1: Do service providers improve on cultural self-efficacy (knowledge, confidence, and sensitivity/respect)?

Background and rationale

Cultural competency at the personal level

Cultural competency is seen to occur at two to three levels: personal, organisational, and institutional; if the organisation is small, then the latter two may be merged (Sawrikar & Katz, 2014, 2008). Cultural competency at the organisational/institutional level is addressed under RQ8. Here, one critical component of cultural competency at the personal level is being addressed: service providers having a sense of efficacy to work with CALD clients.

Cultural self-efficacy

‘Cultural self-efficacy’ tends to improve with cultural knowledge, which can then affect confidence to work CALD clients, and self-perceptions of how respectful or sensitive of ethnic diversity the service provider feels they are. It is also related to the degree to which service providers are aware of non-ethnic factors relevant to CALD groups, so that they feel competently able to manage cross-cultural similarities and differences. However, data on this latter component was not collected directly. Thus, program attendees were only asked about the former component – self-rated cultural knowledge, confidence, and sensitivity/respect.

These three components of cultural self-efficacy were also seen to be related to other variables examined in Stage 1 of this project. As such, correlations\(^1\) were conducted with other variables of continuous numeric structure, and the results of these analyses are reported under the relevant RQs. Overall, cultural self-efficacy was a key variable in the evaluation study, and seen to be underlying the other variables explored. When statistically examined, they would help demonstrate the effectiveness of the education program.

\(^1\) All correlations in this study calculated Pearson’s bivariate coefficient.
Measures

Participants were asked to rate themselves on three components of cultural self-efficacy: (i) cultural knowledge (B.1 – ‘How knowledgeable do you think you are about CALD groups generally?’), (ii) cultural confidence (B.2 – ‘How confident do you feel to work with CALD victims/survivors of child sexual abuse?’), and (iii) cultural sensitivity (B.4 – ‘How respectful of ethnic diversity (i.e. race, culture, language, and/or religion) do you feel you are in your daily work?’). All three questions were rated on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = Not at all and 5 = Completely.

Changes over time

Table 4 contains descriptive data on self-rated general knowledge about CALD groups, confidence to work with CALD victims/survivors of child sexual abuse, and respectfulness of ethnic diversity in daily work, by the cultural background of the service provider (CALD or Anglo). While data for the total sample is provided, descriptions of change over time have been done separately for CALD and Anglo service providers.

Table 4: Descriptive data on cultural self-efficacy by cultural background of service provider (T1 and T2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General knowledge about CALD groups (B.1)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence to work with CALD victims/survivors (B.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful of ethnic diversity in daily work (B.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cultural knowledge

By cultural background of service provider

Scores on cultural knowledge increased for CALD service providers from T1 (M = 3.7) to T2 (M = 4.0), and for Anglo service providers from T1 (M = 3.0) to T2 (M = 3.5). These changes over time provide speculative evidence for the effectiveness of the program in building cultural competency at the personal level for service providers from both cultural backgrounds.

Notably, scores were significantly lower for Anglo than CALD service providers at both T1 (t(110) = 4.91, p < 0.001) and T2 (t(39.5) = 2.05, p < 0.05). These findings likely reflect tacit cultural knowledge among CALD service providers. Consistent with this, the correlation at T1 between age and cultural knowledge (see Table 5) was stronger for CALD service providers (T1 r = 0.41**) than for Anglo service providers (T1 r = 0.14).

However, after the program, age had no role for CALD service providers (T2 r = 0.02) and an increased role for Anglo service providers (T2 r = 0.47*), indicating that the program reduces the reliance of practitioners on tacit cultural knowledge and increases their reliance on explicit cultural knowledge. The diminished role of age as a co-variate of cultural self-efficacy for CALD service providers is further discussed under ‘Cultural confidence’.

Qualitative data

Despite differences between CALD and Anglo service providers, improvements in cultural knowledge were observed for both. The qualitative data indicates that learning about individualism and collectivism as a framework for understanding the importance of family reputation was seen as particularly useful for developing general knowledge about CALD groups. These participants said:

(Liked best?) The issue of family reputation (Satisfaction Survey_9).

(Liked best?) Individualism vs. collectivism (Satisfaction Survey_1).

(Any other comments?) Individualism vs collectivism (Satisfaction Survey_47).

Reminder about collectivism and individualism – rich discussions (Satisfaction Survey_97).

2 Independent t-tests comparing CALD and Anglo service providers within the T1 and T2 samples are possible, because each data set is treated as cross-sectional. It is only change over time that cannot be statistically tested (repeated measures) due to the longitudinal study design being ‘cohort’.

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Teasing out the impact of a collectivist culture in this level of detail was helpful (Satisfaction Survey_93).

(Liked best?) Discussion of power/collectivism and its impact on our day-to-day work (Satisfaction Survey_32).

I liked how much detail you went into about the collective and individualistic cultures (Satisfaction Survey_49).

The individualism/collectivist was very helpful, I had knowledge on this topic but you provided excellent examples (Satisfaction Survey_8).

The concepts around individualism and collective cultures and barriers etc. particularly interesting and useful (Satisfaction Survey_100).

In one Q&A discussion, two participants who work in Child Safety also said:

Through the whole presentation, all I kept thinking about was every case I ever worked with, literally every face and situation, and the biggest challenge is that we know and understand that parents won’t acknowledge, own up, to the possibility that their child may have been sexually abused by a family member for the need to maintain family face. But that’s the exact reason why the children are removed, they are unable to show a level of protectiveness (Q&A Forum_Adel).

... And that creates a problem further down the track. In kinship care, you look for other people to come in, and they don’t want to make that admission either. They just couldn’t part with the shame (Q&A Forum_Adel).

Similarly, one participant in another Q&A discussion said:

I’ve been a counsellor for a (CALD) client whose world looks like it’s ended because her whole community knew about it and have shamed and rejected her completely. It’s tragic. That’s actually a secondary abuse that’s more impactful than the initial sexual assault (Q&A Forum_Melb).

Cultural confidence

By cultural background of service provider

Scores on cultural confidence increased for CALD service providers from T1 (M = 3.3) to T2 (M = 4.1), as it did for Anglo service providers from T1 (M = 2.7) to T2 (M = 3.4). These changes over time provide further evidence for the likely effectiveness of the education program in building cultural competency at the personal level for all service providers.

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Also, scores were significantly lower for Anglo than CALD service providers at both T1 (t(107) = 2.85, p < 0.01) and T2 (t(42) = 2.50, p < 0.05). Again, this likely reflects tacit cultural knowledge among CALD service providers. Indeed, the correlation between cultural knowledge and confidence (see Table 5) was stronger for Anglo service providers (T1 r = 0.64***, T2 r = 0.74***) than for CALD service providers (T1 r = 0.26*, T2 r = 0.55**), indicating that as explicit cultural knowledge falls for Anglo service providers so too does their confidence. In comparison, as explicit cultural knowledge falls for CALD service providers confidence does not fall to the same extent: implicit cultural knowledge likely works to ‘fill the gap’.

Having said that, the correlation between service provider years and confidence for CALD service providers fell from T1 (r = 0.26*) to T2 (r = -0.01). This further suggests that age – a proxy for life and professional experience – was contributing to confidence for CALD service providers before the program but lost its potency after, with extensive complex explicit knowledge about CALD communities taking its place.

**Qualitative data**

One participant provided qualitative data that demonstrates the relationship between cultural knowledge and confidence. They said, *I really enjoy the morning. I am more aware of myths about sexual abuse and I now feel I can improve my practice on daily basis (Satisfaction Survey_81)*. It is unknown if this participant is of CALD background, but it does show that knowledge and confidence are positively associated: as explicit cultural knowledge increases, confidence to work with CALD victims/survivors of child sexual abuse increases.

Overall, knowledge (and therefore confidence) in this area is desired by practitioners. For example, participants on the baseline survey said:

- *Need more educational sessions like this on CSA (Baseline Survey_21).*
- *I am unsure of everyone’s individual approach to this matter. It is rarely spoken about despite being a settlement service provider (Baseline Survey_25).*
- *I work in an organisation that offers settlement services to CALD groups and I would like to learn more about how to respond to victims/survivors of sexual abuse (Baseline Survey_9).*
- *This is an untouched topic in our program. Sensitive/really challenging topic. It needs to be addressed and there needs to be policies and guidelines around this. Additionally, although I’m from CALD background (Finnish), I am white, so that*
adds to the complication for me to start addressing the issue (Maybe??). But this is so important (Baseline Survey_34).

As a specialised CALD organisation (Multicultural Services Unit, DCP) we respond more appropriately to issues affecting families/child where child sexual abuse allegations have been raised. However as a wider agency the responses are often inefficient (Baseline Survey_95).

Cultural sensitivity/respect

By cultural background of service provider

Scores on cultural sensitivity/respect marginally increased for CALD service providers from T1 (M = 4.4) to T2 (M = 4.6), and for Anglo service providers from T1 (M = 4.1) to T2 (M = 4.4). This indicates that the education program was only slightly effective in building this component of cultural competency at the personal level for all service providers.

At T1, the correlation between service provider years and cultural sensitivity/respect (see Table 5) for CALD (r = 0.09) and Anglo (r = -0.07) service providers were close to zero, suggesting that respect is almost independent of professional experience. This is seen as a positive finding that social work/social justice values begin and remain strong among all service providers regardless of their length in practice. Thus, the program was not likely to be effective in improving cultural sensitivity/respect because this is already high among all service providers.

Although the difference was small scores were significantly lower for Anglo than CALD service providers at T1 (t(109.93) = 3.33, p < 0.01), and not significantly different at T2 (t(42) = 1.51, p > 0.05). As above, this could reflect tacit cultural knowledge and/or confidence among CALD service providers. Indeed, the correlations at T1 between cultural knowledge, confidence, and sensitivity/respect for CALD service providers (see Table 5) were moderate (0.19 < r < 0.47***) but stronger for Anglo service providers (0.28* < r < 0.64***), indicating that these three components of cultural self-efficacy are all associated with one another, but more so for Anglo service providers. That is, as one component decreases for them, the others decrease to a greater extent too.

Thus far, the findings show that CALD service providers have and draw on tacit cultural knowledge in their practice, but that their reliance on this decreased after the program. Consistent with this, the correlation between service provider years and cultural knowledge fell from T1 (r = 0.37*) to T2 (r = 0.03). Similarly, the correlation between cultural knowledge and sensitivity/respect fell from T1 (r = 0.47***) to T2 (r = 0.09).
Qualitative data

Two participants provided qualitative data broadly relating to cultural sensitivity/respect, and their comments show that the program was effective in reminding service providers about its importance:

(Explanation for overall satisfaction rating?) Sparks a conversation and allows workers to continue to be mindful about their cultural competency (Satisfaction Survey_65).

(Any other comments?) Being aware and culturally sensitive when dealing with victims/survivors and thinking broadly about the issues at hand (Satisfaction Survey_59).

Age, work experience, and cultural self-efficacy

Table 5 contains the correlations between age, service provider years, and the three components of cultural self-efficacy. They firstly show, as expected, that age and length of years working as a service provider or other relevant professional are strongly correlated (CALD T1 r = 0.79***, Anglo T1 r = 0.71***; CALD T2 r = 0.82***, Anglo T2 r = 0.74***).

They also show that at T1, the correlations between service provider years and cultural knowledge and confidence were moderate (respectively, CALD r = 0.37*, r = 0.26*; Anglo r = 0.31*, r = 0.34*), suggesting that even in a sample with a high average of approximately 15 years work experience and a range that reaches nearly 50 years, cultural knowledge and confidence only somewhat increase with it. This may be attributed to the fact that fewer CALD client families engage with formal services for practitioners to be able to gain critical on-the-job learning. Indeed, one participant said, Have not worked with CSA victims in CALD space as yet – so unsure re protocols of organisation in this space (Baseline Survey_14).
Table 5: Correlations between age, work experience, and cultural self-efficacy by cultural background of service provider (T1 and T2)

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>T1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Service provider years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP years</td>
<td>0.79***</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
<td>0.37*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP years</td>
<td>0.71***</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>0.33*</td>
<td>0.34*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP years</td>
<td>0.75***</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>0.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001; a – T1 n = 59, T2 21 < n < 23; b – T1 50 < n < 53, T2 20 < n < 21; c – T1 109 < n < 112, T2 42 < n < 44.
Summary

- Cultural competency occurs at the personal and organisational/institutional levels. RQ1 only addressed cultural competency at the personal level; synonymously described here as ‘cultural self-efficacy’, and in turn seen to be made up of three components – cultural knowledge, cultural confidence, and cultural sensitivity/respect. Improvements in cultural self-efficacy were a fundamental indicator of the effectiveness of the program.
- For both CALD and Anglo service providers, scores on cultural knowledge, confidence, and sensitivity/respect increased after the program, demonstrating its effectiveness.
- Generally, CALD service providers have more cultural knowledge, confidence, and sensitivity/respect than Anglo service providers, and all service providers are more respectful than they are knowledgeable or confident.
- CALD service providers were found to rely on tacit cultural knowledge in their practice, but the program increased their reliance on explicit cultural knowledge.
- Although older service providers have more professional experience, they do not have substantially more cultural knowledge or confidence. This is seen to reflect low opportunity to work with this client group, given the low uptake of formal services by CALD communities.
- Changes in cultural sensitivity/respect were marginal, indicating strong social work/social justice values among service providers regardless of their length of professional experience.
- After having attended the program, practitioners report gains in cultural knowledge about individualism/collectivism and family reputation, feel more confident to improve in their daily work practice, and appreciate being reminded of the need to be culturally sensitive and competent.