Courageous Conversations: Engaging CALD communities to dispel the stigma about dementia

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The Tiles of Life
Alzheimer’s Australia National Conference
Hobart 2013
Outline of presentation

• Definition of Stigma
• Demographics of CALD people aged 60+
• Perceptions of dementia among CALD communities
• The impact of stigma on people living with dementia and their carers
• Strategies to dispel stigma among CALD communities
Defining Stigma

• A ‘mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person’\(^1\).

• ‘An attribute, behaviour, or reputation which is socially discrediting in a particular way: it causes an individual to be mentally classified by others in an undesirable, rejected stereotype rather than in an accepted, normal one’\(^2\).

CALD people aged over 60 years in Australia

- In 2005, 16% of people aged over 60 years (1/6) spoke a language other than English at home

- 33% of people aged over 60 years (1/3) were born in a country other than Australia.

- Of all Australians with dementia, 12.4% - around 1 in eight - do not speak English at home.

Cultural Perceptions of dementia

- Dementia: A normal part of ageing
- Supernatural beliefs
- Interpretation of the word “dementia” in languages other than English
- Communication with a person living with dementia
- Attitudes towards using services

The impact of stigma on CALD people with dementia and their carers

- Withdrawal from social activities
- Feeling of guilt and embarrassment
- Depression
- Decrease in quality of life
- Refraining from seeking professional services, early diagnosis, early intervention, respite, and home care.

Access to support (barriers)

- Lack of awareness
  - How to recognise the symptoms of dementia
  - Acknowledge that dementia is a chronic degenerative brain disease
  - Where to find services that provide information and support

- Language and literacy
  - Lack of proficiency in own language
  - Lack of bi-lingual resources

- Transport
Strategies to engage in courageous conversations

- Activity-based education sessions
- Ethnic media
- Inter-generational projects
- Memory Lane Cafés
- Cultural community directed activities
- Linkages with International strategies
- Diversify methods of dementia awareness raising activities
Settings and supportive environments – music and dance
People with dementia, family carers and friends singing in the heart of nature
Acknowledging dementia and quality of life (picking Chestnuts)
Visiting a farm and talking about dementia

Where do we have courageous conversations?
Walking, watching kangaroos and talking about dementia risk reduction
Focusing on existing strengths
Inclusion, validation, acceptance – outdoor excursions
Supported physical exercise for carers and people with dementia
Sharing dementia stories, tears, food, and laughter
Maintaining quality of life: joining in open door social and physical activities
Endless possibilities

WE CAN, WE CAN, WE CAN:
Purpose and pleasure for people living with dementia
A resource for activity workers, volunteers, leisure/lifestyle and recreation professionals, families, friends and carers.

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Agents of change:

• **Community**
  • Family (young and adults)
  • Friends
  • Volunteers
  • Religious leaders
  • Community leaders
  • Ethnic media

• **Health sector**
  • CALD General practitioners (GPs)
  • CALD Aged care workers
  • CALD Nurses
  • Home and Community Care (HACC) services
  • Ethno-specific community and health sectors
Creative strategies

• Health promotion
• Increase enabling factors for social engagement
• The Arts and physical activities
• ‘Cultural activities’ resources
• Fostering Independence and wellness for the person with dementia
• Sustainable programs
• Communication skills
Partnerships and collaborations to promote courageous conversations

- Support groups
- CALD dementia ambassadors
- Local governments
- Community and health services
- Ethnic peak bodies
- Multi-sectoral
COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

ENGAGING CALD COMMUNITIES
IN INTERGENERATIONAL GARDENING
TO RAISE AWARENESS OF DEMENTIA
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