

July 2011



Introduction: Hello readers! Welcome to our newsletter. This newsletter will discuss the benefits of blending disability action plans with multicultural plans or strategies.

Any feedback or contributions are most welcome.

Soapbox:

Happily, we were run off our feet all month in June covering four corners of the state. With so many trips away to new clients and places and bookings at unknown motels or hotels - it makes for an interesting study! We have started a score card and a rating system for each place we stay at and the respective neighbouring 'feeding hole' in those vicinities. Unfortunately we don't seem to find any that have suitable rooms for people with a physical impairment. I'm sure there's a business out there doing something similar that I'd like to know about which might help for us choosing better accommodation options – if you hear of any please let us know! If not, maybe we should start a blog to share our rating system! I think I've fallen in love with Swan Hill's winter weather but would I miss the snowy conditions of Ballarat too much, I wonder?

Our news:

As you may already know, our core business is writing disability action plans (DAPS) and there have been some developments that you may be interested in considering for your next review. Councils are also required to create a Multicultural Strategy as well. There is a move to combine them into one 'Access and Equity' style of Plan. People with a disability and people from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background have similar issues as both are considered as 'marginalized' groups.

The Section 38 of the Disability Act objectives for the development of a DAP include:

1. Removing barriers for accessing goods, services and facilities – isn't it the same or similar for the CALD community?
2. Removing barriers for employment– isn't it the same or similar for the CALD community?
3. Promoting inclusion and participation – isn't it the same or similar for the CALD community?
4. Tangible changes to attitudes and practices (including communication and operational changes) – isn't it the same or similar for the CALD community? The need for interpreters is not just a CALD service it's also a service for people who are deaf. Disability awareness training is important from an organizational culture perspective – why can't we pop in Multicultural awareness training into the mix?

The only major objective not similar in the Multicultural legislation that isn't mirrored in the Disability Act is about 'promoting the benefits of a Multicultural Victoria'. That's an easy action to include into such a 'holistic' plan and could also include 'promoting the inclusion of people with a disability' into that objective.

Moonee Valley Council has a great example of how the two areas can be merged, check out their website. We've undertaken a couple of Plans where we have merged the two and as a strategist – I believe it makes so much strategic sense.

As an immigrant myself, I understand some of the issues that new residents have to face. I have lived in seven different counties and abhor racial intolerance and the discrimination that seems to go hand in hand with that negative attitude and ignorance. I have witnessed first hand some appalling treatment of marginalized communities and individuals and understand that although issues here in Australia are not as bad as other countries, there is still plenty of room

for improvement. Turning the 'idiot box' on to watch the daily news is a constant reminder of that fact.

Maybe this should be in my soap box section? Never mind – I'll keep going....

Anyway, I have **10 tops tips** for effective communication with people from a CALD background:

1. Have a good attitude and be polite (this is good practice anyway don't you think?)
2. Be patient and be comfortable with silences (people listening to you need to translate what you've said in their head then compose a reply, translate back into English then speak – it takes time)
3. Listen attentively and relax
4. Speak clearly and a bit slower (if you speak quickly that is - but not childlike or loud – non English speakers are not necessarily deaf!)
5. Choose the right words (avoid homonyms, jargon, colloquialisms)
6. Avoid using 'extractions' (e.g. isn't, won't) or 'fillers' ('um...', 'like...','yeah, totally.', 'yeah – no')
7. Be aware of body language cues and try to mirror their body language
8. Never correct someone's English unless asked to do so
9. Provide other means of communication like pen and paper, or brochures with pictures or a communication board with visual representations of your services (good for people with a disability too)
10. Think of communication as a puzzle you can solve and enjoy the learning experience!

Show empathy and consider the possible culture shock features:

Having an understanding of what immigrants to Australia have had to encounter will help you to show more empathy. Imagine if your environment, communication, personal situation and political status all changed in one hit – how would you feel? Consider the issues below:

Environment	Personal	Political	Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different climate • Different housing • Separation from loved ones • New foods • New ways of eating • Unfamiliar jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No friends • Having to make new friends • Different values • Shyness • Homesickness • More responsibility • Money worries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prejudice • Different laws • Unspoken rules • New freedoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language • Slang • Body language • Different humour • Colloquialisms • Different etiquette

OK that's it for now – here endeth the lesson! On a more serious work note – if you are interested in reviewing your DAP and would like to incorporate Multiculturalism objectives into it – give us a call.

And on a lighter note, here is a bit of fun (no offence meant):

In a perfect world:

- The British are the police.
- Italians are the lovers.
- The French are the cooks.
- Germans are the engineers.
- Swiss are the time keepers.

- Indians are the spice merchants.
- Australians are the entrepreneurs.

In a chaotic world:

- The British are the cooks.
- Swiss are the spice merchants.
- Italians are the entrepreneurs.
- The French are the engineers.
- Germans are the police.
- Indians are the timekeepers.
- Australians are the lovers.

Other news of interest:

Disability Services Professional Development Grants:

The Department of Human Services, Disability Services recognises the contribution that life-long learning and professional development makes towards a fulfilling work life.

As such, we encourage people currently working or wanting to work in Disability, to apply for Disability Services Professional Development Grants (DSPDGs).

To promote a workforce that reflects the diverse community with which we work, Disability Services encourage people with a disability and people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to apply.

DSPDGs program provide financial support for the development of skills and knowledge in areas of specific need for people with a disability and the development of services for people with a disability.

The DSPDGs program consists of:

Study grants (for study via tertiary or TAFE courses that lead to a qualification): valued at between \$3,000 - \$5,000 (contribution towards course fees only incurred in 2012 & 2013)

Ethel Temby research grants: valued at up to \$9,000 (for costs incurred in 2012 & 2013) for undertaking a research project and presentation and/or publication related to the disability field.

Disability Services encourages people with a disability and people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to apply.

Applications for 2012 are now open and close COB Thursday 25 August 2011

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