

“Starting the Job”

How to support your clients. Rights and access to health in Victoria

Notes from the online module.

The online module may be accessed here: http://refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/wp-content/uploads/articulate_uploads/Starting_the_Job/story.html

Refugee and Asylum Seekers services in Victoria

Mental Health

- Forming an honest and trusting relationship is the first step to helping a client
- You must consider the severity of the client's presentation. Is the client at risk to themselves or to others. If the client seems very unwell and is talking about suicide you need to refer the client to the nearest emergency department for a suicide assessment.
- All public hospitals in Victoria are obliged to see asylum seekers and refugees for free regardless of visa status.
- If a client is not high risk, but is still showing signs of significant mental health needs, then a referral to a mainstream mental health service may be needed. This can be initiated by a Gp. Community Mental health services exist in all regions.
- Not all survivors of trauma have mental health issues, but some do. If you feel a client would benefit from talking to someone at Foundation House , make sure they understand that ALL mental health services in Australia are confidential
- **Children can also be referred into Foundation House**
- It is important they know that Refugees and Asylum Seekers do not have to describe their experience to get a referral - just the impact it is having on their daily life

Foundation House website is for more information and referral processes

<https://www.foundationhouse.org.au>

Directory of Victorian Mental health Services

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealthservices>

Refugee Health Network

(subscribe to monthly e-bulletin)

<https://www.refugeehealthnetwork.org.au>

Health Literacy

- To effectively communicate about a person's health, you need to put the information into their context. Do they believe they should make decisions about their health or is it a doctor or an elder? How do they believe they became sick. If that is the case we need to make sure that they can use the information we give them about their health.

- Adopt a universal precautions approach-that is, in all encounters assume that all clients have a low level of health literacy
- Simplify the information we give everyone, and then check the person understands.
- Use ‘teach back”
 - Explain the concept of a diagnosis or treatment plan to client
 - Assess the client’s recall and understanding by asking the client to explain what you said
 - Repeat the process until the client can demonstrate they have a satisfactory understanding of the information
 - Introduce the next concept

Teach back website

<https://www.teachbacktraining.org>

The Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health website for more information

<https://www.ceh.org.au>

Specialist Refugee Services

- An awareness of culture is useful, but it is important to remember that people are individuals within their own culture. Ethno specific profiles are available on the Victorian transcultural mental health Network website for a general overview : <https://www.vtmh.org.au/resources/communityprofiles.html>
- When looking for a Gp clinic it is important the clinic is well run and respectful of clients and where the staff are willing to book interpreters, and understand the process of booking interpreters.
- Interpreters are a free service for Gps (and for nurses and receptionists working under the Gp’s direction) through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS). To download a form to enrol to be a provider go to <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>
- In Victoria clients can access free dental care through the public dental system. Many public dental services are located with Community Health Services and also the Royal Dental Hospital, Melbourne

Dental

- All RAS eligible for free dental care regardless of age. They have priority of access.
- Exempt from all fees for general assessment and in some cases specialist care
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers do not have to have a Health Care Card to access dental
- Ethnosppecific profiles on the Victorian Transcultural mental health website can give a general oversight <http://www.vtmh.org.au/resources/communityprofiles.html>
- Specialist refugee services across the State including Refugee Health Nurses and Refugee Health Fellows. The best website to find specialist services is <https://www.refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/refer>

Refugee Health Nurses

- The primary role of the RHN is to work with settlement services, referral agencies and local Gps in managing client’s initial health assessments and ongoing health needs.
- RHNs have extensive knowledge of local services and should be the first person to call re health issues for your client.
- RHNs work within a social model of health , which means they consider social, emotional and environmental circumstances that effect their clients health and wellbeing
- All refugees and asylum seekers should be encouraged to receive a comprehensive health assessment which is available for free. <https://www.refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/refer>

Community Health Services

- Community Health services in Victoria provide free or low cost health care for people from refugee and asylum seeker background.
- CHCs have services that supports clients to understand such things as the Australian health systems, transport issues and language barriers
- CHCs have a broad range of services such as general practice, refugee health program, diabetes education, counselling, podiatry, physiotherapy and dental services.
- Many staff provide an outreach service, so therefore the RHNs are able to assess their clients in their own homes.

The directory for community health services is on the website:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pch/commhealth/directory.htm>

Referral Pathways for Children

- Vision checks can be accessed at commercial bulk billing optometrists for clients with medicare cards and through the Australian College of Optometry
- Hearing checks can be accessed at audiology services
- Physiotherapists ,occupational therapist and speech therapy for children can be accessed through community health services
- Specialist paediatric services are recommended for children with complex problems , unaccompanied minors or anyone you are worried about. Children can be referred via a Gp to paediatric services at the Royal Children's Hospital, Dandenong /Doveton, Footscray ,Reservoir e, Melton, Sunshine , Geelong and Ballarat.
- *Education service* . Kindergarten is essential for children's development and to prepare them for school. The child's local kindergarten can be found online through the education departments website ;

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/find_a_service/home.aspx

The Royal Children's hospital immigrant clinic has a link to many relevant websites for caseworkers

http://www.rch.org.au/immigranthealth/clinical/Caseworker_Resources/

Maternal and Child health Services

- MCHN is a free service that supports the family in the areas of parenting, health and development of their children.
- The family and child will have ten regular appointments with the MCHN from the child's birth until school age.
- MCHN can link families into social groups and playgroups to prevent isolation
- A 24hour help line staffed by registered Maternal and child health nurses with interpreters available can be accessed on **PH 13 22 29**
- Case workers for new migrant or refugee families must refer families with children under school age to the local MCHN service and inform them if an interpreter is needed.

Medicare, Bulk Billing and Pharmacy

- Bulk billing means that the health care provider bills medicare directly for any medical or health service. There can be no additional charges for that service.
- All refugees and asylum seekers can access any Bulk Billing service
- Case workers should assist their clients to apply for renewal of their medicare cards before the expiry date.
- If your client is a permanent resident they may well have a health care card. This card allows the client to have concessions on such things as dental and pharmacy. This card can also give the client access to concessions provided by the State and Local governments and some private businesses including education and public transport costs. People with Permanent Protection Visa's

and Australian Citizens are eligible for Health Care Cards. People on Bridging Visa's are not eligible for Health care cards.

- Please note the client held Interpreter card with this symbol has not been added to the presentation. Patient card available on TIS website
http://www.border.gov.au/LifeinAustralia/Documents/interpreter_symbol_text.jpg



Congratulations you have completed the course

Due to commonwealth and State Government changes over time, some information in this training regarding access and eligibility will change.

For up to date written policy and referral information , please go to :

The Victorian Refugee Health Network website

<http://refugeehealthnetwork.org.au>

Good luck in your new position