

ENGAGING WITH CALD COMMUNITIES THROUGH PEER EDUCATION

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Background:

The Multicultural Health and Support Service (MHSS) is a program of the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH). MHSS works with and empowers culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities to achieve better health outcomes in relation to culturally sensitive issues regarding blood-borne viruses (BBV) and sexually transmissible infections (STI)

Methods:

Eight peer educators were recruited from the Indian community and were provided with training on blood-borne viruses and sexually transmitted infections. The aim of this project was to increase the capacity of the community around BBV/STIs and their ability to seek testing, treatment, and care through peer education. The W3 (what works why?) framework indicators were used to present the evaluation findings of the project.

Results:

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the delivery of the sessions to an online platform. Six peer educators delivered education sessions online in English and in community languages to 252 community members in the Indian community who lived in the northwestern Melbourne and metro region.

Conclusion:

We have worked with various communities in the past, but it is the first time the Indian community were engaged in delivering Health Promotion education on sensitive topics. We will talk about how the peer education model was modified to an online project due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes needed to engage effectively with this community online. A key success of the project was its community connections and how these facilitated word of mouth referrals. Additionally, the experience gained in this project enabled the peer educators to secure work in other relevant projects.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No conflicts of interest to declare.