

Developing a CALD Audit Tool for AOD Services: Experiences from four pilot sites

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Background: Research has consistently identified that Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) populations have particular language, socio-communal, health and cultural/spiritual needs and strengths that influence Alcohol and other Drugs (AOD) help-seeking and treatment experiences (1,2). Efforts to improve service delivery to date have largely focused on workforce responses, however strategies that can address broader organisational and structural influences on service delivery and outcomes for CALD clients are also needed (3,4).

Description of Intervention: This project has developed a new CALD audit tool to assess how organisations respond to CALD clients across all aspects of service delivery, including Governance, built environment, community liaison, therapeutic interventions, and staffing. The process is based on a previously successful model developed to improve responses for First Nations clients, guided by an Expert Advisory group and evaluated by UNSW's Centre for Social Research and Health.

Implementation: Trained cultural auditors administer the audit tool at four NSW pilot sites at baseline and at three-month follow-up, allowing for sites to implement targeted improvement strategies. Whilst common strategies for service delivery and broader policy enhancement have been identified, the complexity of inter/intra community diversity requires specific consideration to avoid reductionist and tokenistic responses.

Conclusion and Next Steps: Experiences from pilot sites and comparisons with outcomes of a similar group of services that did not participate in the audit will inform further development of the tool and processes.

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