

Health and social Services: The language connection

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We live in a diverse community ...

- Auckland: 40% born overseas
- Refugee reception centre sited in Auckland
- NZ: 25% born overseas



Multiculturalism - a global phenomenon

Multiculturalism? Pluralism? Hybridity?

*How do we create an environment that embraces these ~
where there is harmony and equity for all ethnic groups and
languages?*

And ...

- How do we welcome newcomers?
- How do we ensure social cohesion?
- How do we affirm all cultures and languages?
- How do we communicate effectively with one another?
- How do we respect individuals with other languages/backgrounds?
- How do we develop multi-cultural, multi-lingual, pluralistic communities of practice?
- How do we preserve our first language and culture and local languages (eg: Pasifika) and diminish hegemony?
- Do we share power?

Which of these are connected to 'language'?

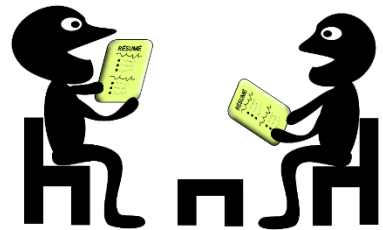
Health and social services ...

Do the following contribute towards health and well-being? (cf: strategy principle 3)

- An authentic welcome – (*what does this look like?*)
- Inclusion: a ‘place’ for all newcomers (“)
- Being able to communicate effectively
(*home languages; ESOL; interpreters*)
- Feeling one’s skills and knowledge are valued
- Knowing there is a place for the values, practices and events of one’s culture, homeland
- Seeing / hearing familiar language and images (signs, notices, forms, posters, brochures, greetings, pictures ...)



Language - connection to wellbeing?



Indigenous and endangered languages: Sociology of language shift (Krauss, 1997)

- Loss of identity and low self esteem
 - High suicide rates
 - High educations dropout
 - Low standardised test scores
 - Poverty
 - Substance abuse
-
- Language has strong spiritual and emotional connections
 - “It’s not about language – its about community health” S. Thorne (2015)



When a person's language is acknowledged ...

- The person feels valued

When a person feels valued ...

- They develop confidence

When confidence is developed

- The person becomes more positive and more autonomous

With wellbeing and autonomy comes: ..

- Success in learning; employability; improved health; increased “market value” (that is, there are economic benefits ..)



The ESOL connection

- Ability to make friends
- Access to services & the wider community
- Access to knowledge / information / new learning
- Ability to contribute to communities
- Ability to gain autonomy
- Friendships with a multicultural, multilingual class cohort
- Joy, fun, challenge, a goal or purpose





Good Service providers / teachers:

- Have an inclusive institutional culture
- Are aware of client's cultural (or other) background
- Use interpreters whenever needed and know how to work professionally with interpreters (strategy principle 10)
- Have intercultural communication skills
- Understand migration and trauma
- Appreciate and enjoy diversity
- Ask and encourage questions and check understanding
- Support multilingualism (strategy principles 3,7,10)
- Provide translations
- Examine their personal disposition – openness to other languages and cultures





Interpreting: Code of Ethics

- Accuracy
 - Use first person; no additions; no omissions; no changes; same expression
- Impartiality
 - Humility; giving client a voice; triangular seating arrangement
- Confidentiality
- Disclosure of conflict of interest
- Professional education & competence

Refugee-background newcomers, in particular:

- Finally have a new permanent 'home'
- Have a sense of purpose and hope in their lives
- Want to retain the languages and cultural practices they love and did not choose to leave behind
- Need to:
 - re-gain self-esteem and confidence
 - re-gain power that was taken from them
 - ensure 2nd generation can communicate with parents & elders
 - learn to trust and make new friends
 - receive their human rights! (strategy principle 2)



The background of the slide is a complex, repeating pattern of teal and blue triangles and polygons, creating a mosaic-like effect.

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