

MCWH Quality Standards:

Multilingual Health Education Programs



Putting Immigrant & Refugee Women's Health First

MCWH

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putting immigrant women's health first

About the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) is a statewide women's health organisation which is committed to improving the health of immigrant and refugee women around Australia. MCWH is for all women from immigrant communities, including refugee and asylum seekers and women from both emerging and established communities.

Our core services are the Industry Visits (IVP) and the Community Workshops (CWP) Programs. We have a comprehensive Multilingual Library and Resource Collection covering a range of topics. You are welcome to contact us about your health information needs and to ask us to send you related resources. MCWH provides professional training and specialises in intensive training programs for bilingual community workers.

The IVP and CWP programs follow a holistic, peer-education model that respects immigrant and refugee women's experiences and knowledge. The Programs are conducted by our bilingual Community Health Educators who are trained to discuss sensitive women's health issues in the preferred language of the participants.

Generally health education sessions are conducted in factories or other workplaces where women participants are employed, or in community spaces—wherever women gather including community health services, neighbourhood houses, senior citizens clubs, other social clubs and people's homes. We also hold information stalls at various gatherings such as conferences, festivals and women's health days. We often work with event organisers to hold mini-health sessions in the languages of their women participants. This gives women an opportunity to find out about MCWH and gain an insight into how our programs are run.

About the MCWH Multilingual Health Education Program

The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) is a statewide women's health organisation which is committed to improving the health of immigrant and refugee women around Australia. MCWH has been providing health education and information to women in the workplace and in the community for thirty years. We are a government funded, non-profit organisation.

Our health education sessions are conducted by:

- ✦ bilingual/bicultural Community Health Educators;
- ✦ in the language of the women participants;
- ✦ wherever the women gather;
- ✦ and are free of cost.

Our health education sessions are also measured against a set of Quality Standards which guide their development, implementation and evaluation. The Quality Standards are: Women's Empowerment; Cultural and Linguistic Appropriateness; Accuracy of Health Information; Access and Equity; Confidentiality; Collaboration; and Continuous Improvement.

The sessions are conducted within a participatory model that acknowledges and respects the knowledge that the women already have about their health and their bodies. We call this our 'woman-to-woman' approach.

Our bilingual Health Educators approach the women we work with as peers and not as experts who will tell them what is 'best' for them. Women are given a choice as to how much they would like to be involved in discussion and are acknowledged for their own experience and knowledge. Confidentiality is assured from the beginning of the process.

The sessions are supported by written resources which are prepared in the language of the group and distributed to individual women. Resources are designed to offer women additional information in their preferred language and for future reference.

MCWH Quality Standards:

Multilingual Health Education Programs

MCWH Health Multilingual Education Programs are delivered according to standards in the following areas:

1. Women's Empowerment
2. Cultural and Linguistic Appropriateness
3. Accuracy of Health Information
4. Access and Equity
5. Confidentiality
6. Collaboration
7. Continuous Improvement

Each of these areas is inter-related and is essential to the maintenance of high quality standards in multilingual health education for immigrant and refugee women.

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women's
empowerment



cultural &
linguistic
appropriateness



continuous
improvement



mcwh
multilingual
health
education
programs

accuracy
of health
information



collaboration



access &
equity



confidentiality



women's empowerment



women's health information in your language

mcwh multilingual health education standard 1:

MCWH Health Education Programs empower immigrant and refugee women to take control of their own bodies and to make informed decisions about their own health and wellbeing. Women are the experts of their own lives, and have the rights to self-determination and self-advocacy in relation to their own health and wellbeing.

Programs follow a feminist and social model of health, taking into consideration the social, political and economic conditions which circumscribe immigrant and refugee women's experiences of health and wellbeing.

INDICATORS:

- a. Sessions are conducted according to the MCWH 'Woman-to-Woman' Approach, where health information is exchanged among women in a non-hierarchical manner. Women are active contributors and their knowledge, experiences and choices are respected.
- b. Information shared increases women's knowledge about women's health and wellbeing issues and builds their capacity for making informed choices.
- c. Sessions are conducted in small, women-only, language-specific groups, and are conducted as a series, rather than as one-off sessions, to facilitate active discussion and the development of group trust and rapport.
- d. Sessions are non-discriminatory, non-judgemental and conducted in a safe, non-threatening environment chosen by the women.
- e. Uniqueness of experiences, personality, needs and aspirations of each individual woman is respected and acknowledged.
- f. Participants are actively involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of sessions.

cultural and linguistic appropriateness



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mcwh multilingual health education standard 2:

MCWH Health Education Programs are responsive to immigrant and refugee women's cultural and linguistic needs, recognising the complex nature of women's multiple identities and the impact of global political events on cultural identity and language needs.

INDICATORS:

- a. Sessions are conducted by trained bilingual and bicultural health educators who share the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of participants.
- b. Sessions are tailored to suit the specific cultural context relevant to the group and the women's health issue covered.
- c. Sessions are conducted in language-specific groups in the language(s) preferred by participants.
- d. Multilingual audio/visual aids and models are utilised during the session.
- e. Multilingual health information is provided to participants.

accuracy of health information



women's health information in your language

mcwh multilingual health education standard 3:

MCWH Health Education Programs offer accurate, up-to-date, relevant and culturally and linguistically appropriate women's health information and education to immigrant and refugee women.

INDICATORS:

- a. All multilingual health information provided to education session participants is screened for accuracy, appropriateness and relevance.
- b. Bilingual health educators have appropriate qualifications, skills, competency and suitability for delivery of education sessions.
- c. Bilingual health educators are trained by expert organisations and assessed for competency against key performance criteria in the areas of sexual, reproductive, occupational and mental health.
- d. Bilingual health educators are provided with team and individual support, and participate in ongoing performance assessment processes and professional development activities.

access and equity



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mcwh multilingual health education standard 4:

MCWH is accessible to all immigrant and refugee women, addressing the barriers that hinder access to health services and ensuring programs meet the needs of diverse women.

INDICATORS:

- a. Sessions are provided in an outreach capacity in women's workplaces, community settings, homes, educational institutions and other locations suitable to participants, including in rural, regional and remote areas of Victoria.
- b. Sessions are conducted on any day of the week and at any time of the day suitable to the particular group.
- c. Sessions are tailored to the specific and diverse needs of all immigrant and refugee women, including women with disabilities, same-sex attracted women, outworkers, shift-workers, mothers, carers, rural women, young women and newly-arrived women.
- d. Sessions are offered in a significant number of community languages reflecting those spoken by a range of immigrant and refugee women around Victoria, including newly-arrived women.
- e. Sessions are non-judgemental and non-discriminatory.
- f. Sessions are promoted widely among diverse immigrant and refugee women, using a variety of media and methods.

confidentiality



women's health information in your language

mcwh multilingual health education standard 5:

MCWH respects and maintains the right of service-users to privacy and confidentiality. The assurance of confidentiality within health education programs is essential, particularly within small and well-networked communities, to maintain women's autonomy and freedom of choice. Assurance of confidentiality facilitates the development of trust and rapport and enables sensitive and complex issues to be openly discussed in safety.

INDICATORS:

- a. Bilingual health educators maintain privacy and confidentiality on all matters discussed with women.
- b. Policies have been developed on confidentiality of information and data entered.
- c. MCWH workers keep information on individuals only for the purpose of collecting aggregated information to meet reporting and evaluation requirements. Electronic data collection refers to individual women as 'anon' in order to protect individual's confidentiality.
- d. Where a women's name has been noted for an information referral it is blacked out at the end of each month.

collaboration



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mcwh multilingual health education standard 6:

MCWH collaborates with a range of agencies to ensure that sessions are well-organised, well-attended, culture and language appropriate, and located in a suitable venue. Collaboration also ensures that women are well-linked with their local, women's and ethno-specific health and welfare services after sessions are completed.

INDICATORS:

- a. MCWH collaborates with workplaces, educational institutions, unions, local organisations and groups to organise, promote and evaluate sessions.

- b. MCWH collaborates with women's, ethno-specific, health and welfare agencies to link and refer women to appropriate local services and activities.

- c. MCWH collaborates with women's, ethno-specific, health and welfare agencies to promote appropriate services among immigrant and refugee women.

continuous improvement



women's health information in your language

mcwh multilingual health education standard 7:

MCWH Health Education Program delivery is continuously evaluated in order to improve processes followed and impact on women. Women's assessments and recommendations for improvements are collected, analysed and utilised to make program changes. Evaluation takes into account cultural, geographical, employment, economic, religious and migration status differences among women, so that sessions may be specifically tailored to meet the needs of different groups.

INDICATORS:

- a. Each session is evaluated by participants and by bilingual health educators.
- b. Each series of sessions is evaluated by participants and by bilingual health educators.
- c. Evaluation findings are collated, analysed and fed back to the program coordinator and bilingual health educators in an ongoing way during the year, and annually, so that appropriate changes may be made to programs.
- d. An independent evaluation is conducted periodically and findings inform MCWH strategic planning.

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