

Cross Cultural Newsletter

20 November 2012

Dear Members

We had another interesting evening on 23rd October 2012. About 25 of our members attended. This is an ideal number for close interactions and discussions. Victoria Camplin-Welsh was the speaker. As usual, her presentation was superb, richly and colourfully illustrated by video clippings. Her topic was: **CALD 9 - A PROGRAMME TO ENHANCE SKILLS IN MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE ACROSS CULTURES.**

This is a new and useful addition to the range of CALD training programmes already available.

Victoria introduced her topic by giving a run-down description of all the CALD programmes in order to inform the audience the gap that CALD 9 fills. She then provided a detailed description on the nature of the new programme; and, most importantly, demonstrated the new features, including supplementary resources and the advantages these offer to the trainee.

As the number indicates, CALD 9 is the ninth programme of this nature. The first four target the busy clinicians who have little time to attend face-to-face training but eager to learn at their own time and pace. These are mostly on-line training. Series 5, 6 are mainly face-to-face ones. There are advantages and

disadvantages to these two types. CALD 9 is the best of both worlds, including both an on-line part and a face-to-face component. The former also includes opportunities for E-learning. More importantly, CALD 9 provides supplementary resources for those who are keen to learn more. To fulfill the wide needs, CALD 9 covers the most important topic on Mental Health Issues for both migrants and Refugees. As the last implies, CALD covers client groups from a wide diversity of cultural groups.

Victoria then described in detail both the type of trainees it targets, the content of the training, and the outcomes of the training.

The aims of the programmes are ambitious. It caters for the needs of people from different sectors including those whose main styles of learning are audio, visual or through practice. By embracing face to face, e-learning and practice-through-exercises components, CALD 9 aspires to fulfill all their needs. Exercises would also allow trainees an opportunity to reflect and to put their skills into practice on such issues as assessment, applying treatment plan etc.

Victoria then talked about the learning outcomes. It is expected that at the end of the course, trainees would be able to identify the challenges in cross cultural mental health work; become

aware of how different cultural values could affect the implementation of western psychological and psychiatric principles and values; gain an overview of how different cultural groups express their distress; improving on or gaining skills in multicultural assessment, including adapting assessment tools to suit the need; and ultimately become skilful clinicians in treating and managing mental health clients from different cultural backgrounds.

As to how the course is structured, Victoria said that there are three sections aiming at awareness; cultural formulations; and collaboration for intervention. The awareness section is moulded around the DSMIV, covering the changing cultural scene (globalisation); issues in cross cultural assessment; somatisation, critical role of rapport and skills to attain such across cultures; confidentiality issues, family supports; culture bound syndromes and lastly but not least assessment and screening. As to cultural formulation, culture sensitive assessment is the tool to attain the ultimate aim of providing a cultural formulation. The topics cover language in assessment, explanatory models of illness, developing a clinical formulation, common screening tools, tests and formats, mental

status examination and lastly the section is richly demonstrated by video snippets. The last section is on intervention and collaboration with culturally significant others, covering such areas as developing a collaborative mentality; addressing the cultural elements of the therapeutic relationship with the client; transference issues, and achieving a common therapeutic plan, covering such treatment issues as ethno-psycho-pharmaco-therapy; creating a culture relevant treatment plan; adopting a holistic approach by considering the cultural elements in the treatment plan and seeking professional supervision in ones cross cultural practice. Like the other two, this section is also demonstrated by video clippings.

Lastly, Victoria highlighted an important requirement which is provided in CALD 9: the provision of supplementary resources to enhance and broaden learning of the trainee. This section would provide additional information which the trainee could choose wisely according to their needs.

Having thus roused the interests of the audience, Victoria provided information on how to enrol.

The presentation attracted many questions, especially relating to how to enrol. However, one of the most important issues is that training programmes need to provide follow-up services to ensure what is taught is practical and that trainees would be helped and guided to apply their knowledge. In this, because of financial constraints, such follow-up services have yet to be

implemented. As a supplement and an exploration of the need for such follow-up services, it is decided that the last cross cultural evening be dedicated to case discussion to allow past trainees of various cross cultural training programmes to bring up issues. It is also decided that vignettes rather than long cases demonstrating the issues would be the best way to stimulate discussions. A panel would be formed by enlisting the help of past trainers of the various training programmes in Auckland to discuss issues.



The session finished at 8.15 pm. By the time you receive this newsletter, a DVD would be available. Please request a copy from Tracey. Also, the flyer announcing the last presentation of the year would be on your way.

Highlights of the next session

As per above discussion, the next session is now planned to be on 4th December, 2012. The topic is:

PRACTICAL ISSUES IN CROSS-CULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH PRACTICE: A WORKSHOP AND PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Panel members include: Patrick Au, Dr Ashok Malur, Ms Renuka Wali and yours truly. The panellists are all experienced trainers in various programmes.

Thank you once again for your support. I look forward to seeing you all in our next meeting, the last one for the year.

Yours sincerely,

S Wong

On behalf of the Cross Cultural Group

