

Working with CALD or MCMF Families and Trans Young People



Information for Practitioners

When working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or Multicultural Multifaith (MCMF) families and young people, it's very important to adopt an approach that includes cultural humility, trauma-informed care, and a strengths-based mindset.

It is well documented that poor mental health and wellbeing outcomes are more prevalent in trans and gender diverse populations and LGBTIQ+ communities than in the general community.

This is due to multiple factors, including stigma, prejudice, discrimination, lack of family and social support and violence. These factors may be more prevalent among people from diverse communities where gender diversity and sexual diversity are less socially acceptable.

CALD and MCMF families may experience systemic bias, language barriers, fear of authority, discrimination or shame. This will affect their ability to engage with support systems.

Trans and gender diverse young people from CALD or MCMF backgrounds may also experience racism and discrimination within the LGBTIQ+ community.

Why Cultural Responsiveness Matters

Culture shapes how families understand parenting, discipline, child development, and safety.

Culture and religious beliefs shape families' and communities' attitudes towards different gender and sexual identities.

CALD families may experience systemic bias, language barriers, and fear of authority. They might feel shame engaging with child protection.

Mental health, stress, or grief may look different across cultures. Families may prioritise survival or practical needs over emotional wellbeing.

Tips for using interpreters

- Use interpreters who are not connected to the family or the local community.
- Ensure interpreters are appropriately briefed and use a service whose interpreters are known to be inclusive.
- Avoid using the young person or a relative as an interpreter.
- Clarify the importance of interpreting everything that is said—no summarising or omitting.
- Be aware of non-verbal communication.
- Check for understanding

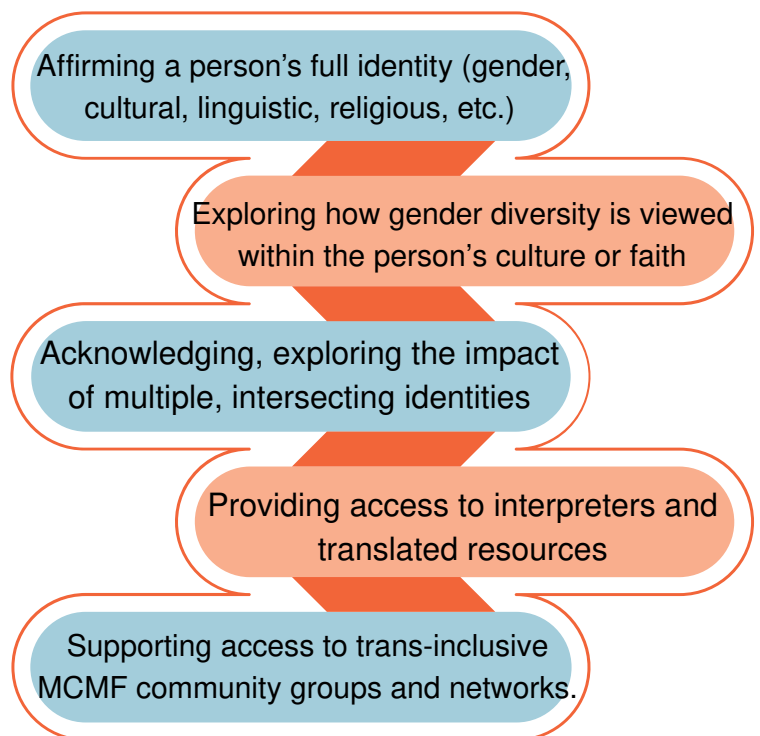
Barriers to accessing support

- Young people might feel **family or internal pressure** to follow traditional cultural or faith-based gender expectations.
- Young people might find it **hard to balance their cultural or faith identity with their gender identity**. This might make them feel like they don't belong.
- Families and young people might feel **shame and fear of discrimination** from within and outside their communities.
- They might **feel unsafe in religious spaces, hurt or rejected** by non-affirming faith communities. This is distressing for young people and families for whom spirituality is an important part of their identity.
- For second and third generation migrants, who already juggle multiple complex multicultural and multifaith identities, the challenges might lead to **increased isolation, identity conflict, and difficulty accessing appropriate support**.
- For many people from multicultural backgrounds, the **option of changing legal documents might be restricted** by laws in the country of origin.
- Young people and families are **less likely to seek mental health support** and general support due to anticipated fears of discrimination and prejudice.
- For those with intersecting identities (multicultural, multifaith, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.) it will be **harder to find spaces where all parts of their identity are seen, affirmed and safe**.
- **Mistrust of support and health services** might be prevalent, especially for those that might have experienced being called by the birth name they no longer go by, misgendered and racially discriminated against all in one appointment.
- Cultural **shame or fear of community backlash** may cause secrecy, isolation, or denial

Protective Actions

- Ensure the young person has at least one affirming adult in their life.
- Advocate for safe, inclusive school and healthcare environments.
- Help families access translated materials and culturally competent services.
- Work with LGBTIQ+ and multicultural services for wraparound support.

What Support Looks Like



Informal Supports and Resources

[Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council](#)

[Centre for Multicultural Youth](#)

[Inclusive Communication with LGBTIQ+ Clients Guide](#)

[Intersex Human Rights Australia](#)

[Minus 18](#)

[Twenty10](#)

[Rainbow Terminology](#)

[Rainbow Cultures](#)