

Contents

Before you begin	vii
Topic 1 Identify social and cultural issues impacting on clients in Australian society	1
1A Identify major social and cultural institutions in Australian society	2
1B Identify ways in which major institutions in Australian society can impact clients	16
1C Examine and identify possible effects and consequences of conditions and experiences of inequality on clients	30
1D Identify impacts of long-term unemployment and associated issues on clients	40
1E Identify factors associated with age in Australian society and their impact on clients	44
Summary	51
Learning checkpoint 1: Identify social and cultural issues impacting on clients in Australian society	52
Topic 2 Analyse impacts of social and cultural factors on clients	57
2A Use available information to identify and analyse social and cultural factors	58
2B Clarify current health and wellbeing and associated needs	66
2C Make informed decisions in relation to specific work to be undertaken	73
Summary	76
Learning checkpoint 2 : Analyse impacts of social and cultural factors on clients	77
Topic 3 Monitor impact of social and cultural factors on community work	81
3A Monitor impact of work undertaken	82
3B Review effectiveness of work undertaken	91
3C Revise aspects of work undertaken	96
Summary	101
Learning checkpoint 3: Monitor impact of social and cultural factors on community work	102

Example**Functions of two important institutions in Australian society**

Below are two examples that show the way Australian institutions function.

Family

From a sociological point of view the family is a social institution which

- ▶ regulates sexual behaviour and reproduction
- ▶ nurtures and protects children (new members of society)
- ▶ passes culture from one generation to the next
- ▶ provides a stable unit of consumption and production, depending on the type of economy. (Waters and Crook, 1994 p299)

Family can also be a determinant of social status or position, through inheritance. In Australia this is not as rigid as in some other societies, but family can be a factor in determining an individual's life chances.

Government

In most modern societies government has these functions:

- ▶ to preserve and protect the society from external and internal threats
- ▶ to encourage citizens to support the values of the society through socialisation and education
- ▶ to regulate the economy
- ▶ to produce goods and services
- ▶ to supervise and resolve conflicts and maintain order
- ▶ to protect the rights of citizens.

The health system

The function of the healthcare system in Australia is to provide comprehensive health care of a high standard to all Australians, regardless of their socioeconomic and social circumstances.

From a sociological point of view, a healthcare system contributes to the stability of a society by maintaining reasonable health amongst most of the population; it helps society to function by keeping most people, especially those of working and reproductive age, healthy and able to carry out their employment and family roles; it contributes to the economy by keeping the labour force healthy; and it provides care for the ageing sector of the population, which allows family carers to remain productive members of the workforce.

Here is more information on the Australian health system.

Medicare

Australia has a universal healthcare system known as Medicare, which is subsidised by the government through general taxes and ensures affordable (often free) health care to all Australian citizens and permanent residents. This is significantly different from the user-pays system in the US where most health care is privately owned and provided, which results in many people not being able to afford the level of health care they need.

Private health sector

Australia also has a thriving private health sector. Membership of a private health fund is encouraged by the federal government through a subsidy for those who join private health funds.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

An important aspect of Australia's healthcare system is the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), which subsidises the cost of drugs, making access to medication equitable for all Australians.

Public health policies

In 1986, the First International Conference for Health Promotion was held by the World Health Organization (WHO) in Ottawa, Canada. From this conference, The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion was developed and signed by a number of signatory countries, including Australia.

This charter now forms the basis for many public health policies in Australia. It dictates advocacy, enablement and mediation for good health through five key action areas for health promotion:

- ▶ building healthy public policy
- ▶ creating supportive environments
- ▶ strengthening community action
- ▶ developing personal skills
- ▶ reorienting health services.

Unemployment

Employment supports access to health, housing, education and other essential services. People who are unemployed often attract negative stereotypes, and long-term unemployment is a barrier to attaining a reasonable quality of life for many disadvantaged groups. Unemployment is often assumed to be an individual failure or fault, rather than a result of structural and economic factors. A high rate of long-term unemployment is linked to a range of social ills including poverty, high levels of preventable illnesses, homelessness, mental illness, use of drugs and alcohol, disaffection and disengagement from society and crime.

This is not to say that people who experience long-term unemployment are bad people, but that there are clear statistical links between these social issues and long-term unemployment. This is an example of how structural factors contribute to social issues and affect people's lives.

Example

The Jones family

The Jones family lives in a working class suburb, in a rented four-bedroom house. Neither Mr nor Mrs Jones completed high school. They have five children ranging in age from six months to 10 years. Mr Jones works as a builder's labourer. Until their youngest child was born, Mrs Jones had a part time job in a local bakery, working from 3am–9am. This allowed her to be home for most of the day. The children were cared for by a kindly elderly neighbour in the mornings after Mr Jones left for work, until Mrs Jones came home from work. Mrs Jones is planning to return to her job when the baby is weaned in about six months' time. Her employer has promised to keep her job open for her, but small businesses in the area have been closing down.



Mr Jones sometimes works away from home, leaving Mrs Jones to care for the children alone for several weeks, sometimes months, at a time.

Their eldest child, Sam, is struggling at school and failing national NAPLAN tests. Teachers have advised Mr and Mrs Jones to have him assessed by an educational psychologist, but there is a two-year wait list within the school system, and the Jones cannot afford to take Sam to a private child psychologist. Sam has recently begun truanting and has twice been brought home by the police after being found with a group of older boys suspected of shoplifting.

Mr Jones has been finding his work and home life stressful, and last week he was arrested for public drunkenness and using obscene language in public. He is on a personal bond to appear in the local magistrate's court next month. This is not his first offence and the Joneses are worried that he may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment, which would have a devastating effect on the family's finances and functioning. They cannot afford a lawyer and have not been able to access legal aid. With the pending court case and the downturn in the building trade, if Mr Jones loses his job, the family will not be able to pay their rent. There is currently a three-year wait for public housing in their area, longer for larger families.

Mrs Jones is overweight and frequently becomes breathless and faint. Her blood pressure is high and she has recently noticed a lump in her left breast.

Deliah works in a local community and family centre. She is aware of the Jones family's situation because Mrs Jones has been to see her to discuss her concerns and to ask for advice and assistance.

A free market economy

The notion of the free market underpins capitalist economic theory. This means that government intervenes as little as possible in economic activities. The market is a significant influence on government policy and services. One argument is that allowing people to accumulate wealth creates a trickle-down effect; that is, people with more wealth spend money and employ workers, which means that this filters down to the less wealthy. An example of this in Australia include the mining industry which in times of prosperity employs a large number of workers as well as accumulating wealth for company owners and shareholders.



In less prosperous times, workers are laid off, creating higher levels of unemployment and increasing demand for social and community services. In Australia, government is relatively interventionist and has enacted laws which regulate trade and set minimum conditions for workers, and funds social and community services which act as a safety net in less prosperous times. Funding for services is collected through taxation.

Contemporary economic frameworks

Contemporary economic frameworks in Australia are based on a version of capitalism which is characterised by private or corporate ownership of assets and where investors are free to buy, sell, produce and distribute goods with limited government intervention. Social policy is directed towards assisting people who are disadvantaged within this economic system. The concept of inequality is central to this approach to social policy.

Contemporary political frameworks in Australia are based on parliamentary democracy where government is freely elected to represent the citizens of the country. This approach to social policy includes consulting citizens about social concerns and ways of addressing them. In this approach, the media plays a role in social policy development by identifying and raising public concerns.

Australian political system

Australia is a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy, which means that citizens vote to elect representatives to carry out the business of government.

Elizabeth II is the Queen of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and Head of the Commonwealth. She is the nominal head of the government and is represented by the Governor-General of Australia.

Australia has a Constitution which sets out rules for how the government must operate, such as the separation of powers; three separate bodies which act independently, the Legislature (Parliament), the Executive (government departments) and the Judiciary (the courts). This is intended to prevent oppressive government.

Australia's government is divided into an upper house (Senate) and lower house (the House of Representatives). Australia has three levels of government: federal, state/territory and local. There are four prominent political parties.

Families

With an increasing demand for aged care facilities, greater emphasis is likely to be placed on families continuing to care for ageing relatives in their own homes. As a community service worker, you must understand and be sensitive to the following factors:

- ▶ Stress associated with families trying to cope with caring for older relatives
- ▶ Financial burdens placed on families caring for older relatives
- ▶ Mental and emotional fatigue from performing carer roles
- ▶ The effects on the health of carers within a family
- ▶ Isolation of older people with no family support

The education system

Education has a significant impact on a society. The educational attainment of individuals has a flow-on effect to families and communities in society.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has conducted significant research demonstrating the relationship between educational attainment and social outcomes. Generally, the higher the level of education attained by an individual, the:

- ▶ longer their life expectancy
- ▶ more civic activity they will engage in
- ▶ more satisfaction they experience with their life circumstances.

The impact of education

Those with higher levels of education have the potential to work in higher paying jobs and earn more money. Evidence suggests that education can help people improve their life circumstances, by gaining access to networks that will help them improve their social outcomes. There are also significant causal relationships between educational attainment and health, crime and social cohesion.

Education also contributes to the socialisation process. From a sociological perspective, educational institutions exist for the manifest purpose of teaching knowledge and skills, and preparing students for adult work and life; they also have the latent function of teaching attitudes and values. Australia has both public (state run) and private schools. Affluent families may select schools which reflect their own values and what they see as their own social position; less affluent families usually send their children to state schools. This dual system may reinforce class structures in Australian society.



Providing better health

In Australia, government health initiatives, community campaigns and educational programs all combine to provide better health service.

Here are some examples of health initiatives and campaigns.



Anti-smoking and the Quit campaign

Public policy: anti-smoking legislation, plain paper packaging, government-funded media campaigns.

Supportive environments: enforced non-smoking in public places.

Community action: community petitions, community-based quit campaigns.

Developing personal skills: educating about ways to beat addiction and the health dangers of smoking.

Reorienting health services: making quit services supportive rather than blaming, having telephone access to Quit lines.



Breast cancer screening

Public policy: free screening to women over 50 years of age, government-funded media campaigns.

Supportive environments: access to breast screening clinics.

Community action: Pink Ribbon Day.

Developing personal skills: teaching women how to self-check.

Reorienting health services: access to breast screening clinics.



Drug abuse assistance strategies

Public policy: National Drug Strategy (NDS), harm reduction/minimisation, alcopop tax.

Supportive environments: nightclub lockouts, trial injection rooms, methadone clinics, needle disposal bins.

Community action: Community Action Drug Teams (CADT), local drug action groups.

Developing personal skills: educating about harm reduction, zero tolerance and resilience.

Reorienting health services: methadone clinics, drop-in centres.

1C Examine and identify possible effects and consequences of conditions and experiences of inequality on clients

Inequality in society refers to the ways in which individuals, families and communities are positioned in society as a result of social determinants such as education level, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, gender, employment status and geographic location.

While Australia has traditionally been recognised as an egalitarian society, disparities between the rich and the poor in Australia are growing. In particular, over the past 30 years, increases in wage disparity have contributed significantly to social inequality.



Social inequality is multifaceted, and aspects include inequality related to gender, race, age, class and health. You can find more information about inequality in Australian society at this website: www.anglicare.asn.au/site/state_of_the_family_report_2015_who_is_being_left_.php. This report examines the impact of inequality and poverty on families and those at the lower end of the income scale.

Aspects of inequality

You need to understand the many aspects of inequality, including how it may have come about, and the consequences inequality has on people.

There are many marginalised populations in Australian society who are subject to inequality. These include Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders, migrants; women, people who are lesbian, gay, bi or transgender, and people who have mental health issues.

The effects and consequences of inequality include:

- ▶ decreased social, mental, emotional and physical wellbeing
- ▶ reduced ability to participate in citizenship-based activities
- ▶ poverty
- ▶ reduced life expectancy
- ▶ isolation
- ▶ homelessness.

Unemployment

Unemployment may result from a range of factors, such as poor educational attainment, racism, geographic isolation, generational welfare dependency, chronic disease, lack of resources and social dysfunction.

The effects of unemployment can be devastating for individuals, families and communities. In Australia, the unemployment rate measures the number of people actively looking for a job as a percentage of the labour force.

The Australian unemployment rate was at 6.2% in September 2015. You can check the actual values, historical data, forecast, chart, statistics, economic calendar and news on Trading Economics website, at: www.tradingeconomics.com/australia/unemployment-rate.

Below is a summary of some of the effects and impacts of unemployment in the community.

Impacts of unemployment include:

- ▶ low self-esteem
- ▶ loss of identity
- ▶ isolation
- ▶ loss of social networks and support
- ▶ family disruption and breakdown
- ▶ increased risk of mortality and morbidity
- ▶ boredom
- ▶ crime
- ▶ drug and alcohol use.

Racism

Racism is characterised as unfair disadvantage that leads to inequality in resources, power and opportunities as a result of race or ethnicity.

Australia is a multicultural society and, while most Australians are tolerant of other races and ethnicities, there is a subculture of racism that exists in many communities and impacts on the equality of outcomes for those who experience racism.

The effect of racism on quality of life can be significant, including substance use, emotional and behavioural difficulties, poor physical and mental health outcomes and suicide.

Addressing LGBTI inequality

The following is a time line of progress addressing inequality in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) population.

Progress addressing inequality in the LGBTI population

1975	South Australia was the first state to legalise sexual conduct between males.
1976–1990	The rest of the states and territories followed, with the exception of Tasmania where sexual conduct between males remained illegal until 1997.
1984	The Australian Medical Association (AMA) removed homosexuality from their list of illnesses and disorders.
1994	The Commonwealth Government passed the <i>Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act 1994</i> .
2001–	Individual states and territories continue to amend various bills to be non-discriminatory. For example, by granting same-sex couples the right to adopt, to access Centrelink and family assistance, and to inherit property.

Consequences of discrimination

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) population are exposed to physical, mental and emotional harm from homophobic violence or harassment.

Compared to the general population, this subgroup experiences:

- ▶ increased levels of mental health disorders
- ▶ increased rates of self-harm
- ▶ greater incidence of unsafe alcohol and drug use
- ▶ higher rates of obesity.

Example

Conditions and experiences of inequality

Tod has worked for three years at a charitable organisation run by a church. He receives great satisfaction from his job. Tod has been in a same-sex relationship for six years. If asked about his sexuality, he does not hide it, but he does not openly advertise his sexual preference. He has some close work colleagues with whom he and his partner socialise.

One morning, Tod opens the organisation's intranet home page to discover a biblical quote that portrays homosexuality in a negative light. Tod requests a meeting with management to ask that it be removed. Several of his work colleagues attend the meeting in support.

At the meeting, Tod is told that his gay agenda does not belong in a Christian organisation. His supervisor and some colleagues begin to treat him differently. He is rostered on to work at times he has previously indicated he is unable to do and his professionalism is questioned over small matters.

Rather than continue to experience this bullying and harassment, Tod resigns. Consequently, he experiences severe depression. He leaves his partner and loses contact with his work friends, becoming socially isolated.



Example

Impacts of long-term unemployment

Amelia is a young person who has always tried to do well at whatever she attempts. Having finished high school, she completed a management degree and successfully graduated three years ago. Since this time, she has been trying to get employment in the small town where she lived, so that she could also provide some support for her mother who was recovering from a serious car accident.

She tried employment agencies and wrote many applications, was always told that the problem was her lack of experience. She did volunteer work for a year to get some workplace skills, but even this did not help when it came to getting a job.

She became depressed and despondent and found it difficult to get out of bed each day. Finally, she lost interest in her friends as well and spent most of her time at home watching television or movies.

When her mother regained her health, Amelia found that she was able to move to a larger city where there were more opportunities. There she finally found a job that suited her skills and interests and with the dignity of being employed came a return to her former enthusiasm and energy for life.



v1723

Practice task 4

Read the case study, and answer the questions.

Case study

Katrina migrated to Australia with her children from the US where she ran a refugee support service. Shortly after arriving in Australia, Katrina became extremely ill. She eventually recovered, but has had to learn to live with chronic pain.

After three years, Katrina has still not found employment and is starting to become very depressed about having to rely on welfare. Katrina's rehabilitation officer suggests she approach a local community service provider. Katrina meets with a placement consultant who suggests that, based on her background in community work, she complete a Diploma of Community Welfare Work. With the support of the community service provider, Katrina receives her qualification.

She now works in her community and has started a refugee support service that offers a range of support services to new arrivals. Katrina feels she is actively contributing to her new country and helping integrate refugees into mainstream Australian society.

1. Outline briefly how society benefits from the help Katrina received from the community services she received.

Summary

1. Social and cultural institutions underpin Australian society and all societies globally. These include systems for aged care, education, health, law, media, politics, religion, work and family.
2. Community service workers need to know how these institutions impact people's ability to function as an active and healthy citizen in Australia.
3. Inequality in society refers to how individuals, families and communities are positioned as a result of social determinants such as education, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, gender, employment and geographic location.
4. Social stratification is the division of people into groupings based on social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Australian society has marginalised groups for whom equality of opportunity is difficult due to their social, cultural and economic backgrounds.
5. In Australia, long-term unemployment refers to a period of unemployment lasting for greater than one year. Long-term unemployment can have many effects on an individual's health, their family and the community they live in.
6. Age is often a factor in outcomes such as health and employment. Age-related stereotypes can cause both positive and negative discrimination. Community service workers must understand the barriers that ageism may pose to individuals or social groups.

2A Use available information to identify and analyse social and cultural factors

Social and cultural factors can have a negative impact on the people you support. It is crucial that you understand this when working with people so that you can help them make appropriate and informed decisions as to the support they need.

It is important to understand that there is a complex relationship between social and cultural factors and perceptions. Impacts resulting from this relationship are fluid and may change over time.



Research information

As a community service worker, you cannot assume anything about people based on a stereotype or social perception. While social determinants impact people, how they do so varies depending on a number of factors. You will need research skills to collect and analyse information which will increase your understanding of how a range of factors, including social structures, institutions and policy, affect the situations of those with whom you work.

You can collect information by:

- ▶ reading written reports about research reports and surveys
- ▶ reading media articles
- ▶ accessing reports and discussions on websites
- ▶ collecting information directly by talking to people, their families, colleagues and other service providers
- ▶ making your own observations of how services and programs operate, and how people respond to services and programs.

Keep up to date

It is important to keep abreast with research and be able to analyse the impact of current social, cultural and environmental factors on your community. This increases your ability to provide support. Take advantage of any courses or professional development your organisation offers. Sociocultural factors are constantly changing and there is ongoing research into many of the factors that impact on people. Just because you have attended a seminar on a particular topic in the past does not mean the information is still current. The following is some information about current research studies.

NDSHS

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare conducts the comprehensive National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS) every three years. The purpose of this survey is to:

- ▶ provide data on the level, patterns and trends in the use of tobacco, alcohol and other substances
- ▶ identify groups with a high risk for drug abuse
- ▶ measure community awareness and knowledge of legal and illegal drugs
- ▶ measure community support for various drug-related policies.

The most recent survey was conducted in 2013. If you were using data from the previous 2010 survey to guide program development, you would need to ensure your program is still relevant based on the findings of the more recent survey

Other studies

Other current studies include research into male depression, smoking, obesity, anorexia and young people's perception of body image.

Example

Identify and analyse social factors

Anya works in the library at an aged care centre. She is responsible for managing the library resources as well as providing assistance for the many patrons who visit the facility each day.

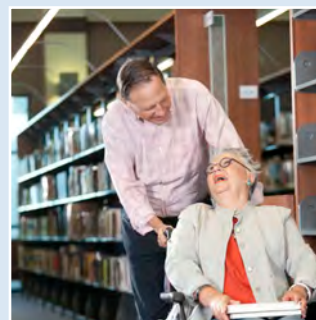
She has noticed that many patrons stop and chat about their books while they are in the library, which congests the aisles and disrupts those who want to have quiet time to read.

She decides to survey the library users to see if there is a need to establish a formal reader group and/or an informal reader cafe where patrons can relax and enjoy their discussions. She prepares a list of questions and asks each person using the library to respond with their thoughts.

At the same time, she makes enquiries to see if there is a coffee shop business that would be interested in setting up a branch at a suitable space adjacent to the library.

The results of her survey indicate an overwhelming interest amongst patrons in being able to get together to chat in an informal setting. With this information in hand, she is in a good position to approach the building manager to see if a lease can be negotiated with the coffee shop business.

The survey also revealed a small group who wanted to set up a formal reader group. With their permission, she puts them in touch with each other and they decide to meet at each other's homes each week to discuss each other's current book.



Unemployment

If a person is unemployed for a long of time, their self-esteem and belief in themselves may be affected. They may incur debt as they have no regular income. Training in job-hunting skills and personal skills is necessary.

Financial hardship

Financial hardship may lead to family breakdown, homelessness and a lack of social contact. Support is needed in understanding and handling finances.

Family problems

Family tension and breakdown can result from any number of interrelated factors such as financial stress, poor health, substance abuse and domestic violence. Family guidance, counselling, parenting training and financial planning are valuable support systems.

Stress and anxiety

Any combination of factors including work-related stress, financial stress, family tension, anxiety disorders and neighbourhood disputes can increase a person's stress and/or anxiety levels. The amount of support the person receives plays a role in their levels of stress and anxiety, and how they cope.

Substance abuse

Poor mental or emotional health, anxiety, depression and stress can all lead to substance abuse. These emotional problems may stem from other factors such as employment problems, family dysfunction or financial hardship. Support that takes into account the person's background and provides opportunities to improve the person's situation is essential.

A problem-solving approach

A problem-solving approach is multifaceted. It requires that you explore the social and cultural factors impacting people you support, brainstorm possible solutions, work collaboratively with other sectors and stakeholders, and then evaluate how well the solutions worked. Once you have analysed the issues, you can look at problem solving.

Some strategies for applying a problem-solving approach follow.

When applying a problem-solving approach:

- ▶ clarify the person's situation so you have a clear understanding of the issues that confront them and their particular needs
- ▶ explore the situation using a range of techniques (e.g. interview, questionnaire, health records)
- ▶ consider a range of appropriate options to resolve or improve the issue
- ▶ discuss the options with the person you are supporting and your colleagues
- ▶ adopt the most relevant solution that has the potential to effectively support the person or community.



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Monitor impact of work undertaken**
- 3B Review effectiveness of work undertaken**
- 3C Revise aspects of work undertaken**

Monitor impact of social and cultural factors on community work

Evaluating services and programs is an essential part of your role as a community services worker. This process allows individuals and organisations to reflect on what they have achieved and use this information to continually improve the programs and services provided. In addition, both government and non-government community services organisations are accountable for the funding they receive. Monitoring, evaluation and review are essential to ensure that outcomes have been successfully delivered and that they comply with government regulations and internal policies.

Ethical obligations

Due to the nature of community services work, you may find yourself in an ethical dilemma when your own values clash with those of the person you are supporting. In these circumstances, you must decide the best course of action to ensure their needs are met and important values are upheld. Always consult with your work colleagues, supervisors and other professionals when deciding on the best course of action.

Working collaboratively helps you to be more objective and to step back and see the bigger picture. You must also collaborate with the person you are supporting. All people have the basic right to make decisions and choices about their lives, including the services they receive. Working collaboratively with people also enhances your working relationship by showing trust and respect. Service plans where the person has input into decisions are more likely to work than are plans where the person feels left out of the decision making.



Ethics and your personal values

Your role, when your values are different from those with whom you work, is to remain non-judgmental and to ensure that people have all the relevant information they need, including all the available options and likely outcomes so that they can make an informed choice. Unless a person has been legally assessed as not having capacity to make decisions; or is an involuntary patient in a psychiatric facility; or a prisoner serving a custodial sentence, all people have this basic right. Even in these situations people have the right to be treated ethically.

You can refer to a relevant code of ethics when you are monitoring and evaluating services.

You can find a sample code of ethics relevant to your work in community services at: www.acwa.org.au/about/code-of-ethics

To ensure that ethical decisions are made:

- ▶ refer to your organisation's policies and procedures
- ▶ stay committed to a moral and ethical standard of professional behaviour (e.g. maintaining a service user's privacy)
- ▶ monitor your work and stay within the boundaries of your role
- ▶ meet the key performance indicators as set out in your position description
- ▶ provide appropriate support to team members
- ▶ follow the ethical guidelines underpinning your work in the community services industry.

Practice task 9

Read the case study, then complete the task that follows.

Case study

Angela is a caseworker in a non-government agency that supports young people from low socioeconomic and disadvantaged backgrounds. The local population consists mainly of older people receiving pensions, sole parent families, unemployed people and people who are refugees and recent migrants. Angela is studying part-time for a Diploma of Community Services. As part of her studies she develops and implements a program to support young refugees.

Angela bases her program on research findings which identify risk factors for the group of young people she works with.

She discovers that:

- ▶ biculturalism (being able to operate and maintain values from their previous culture and their new Australian culture) is a very strong support mechanism
- ▶ school settings play a significant role in supporting biculturalism by allowing students to discuss or write about their home culture in the school environment and share this with other students
- ▶ bicultural identity can enhance a sense of belonging and self-confidence.

In consultation with her manager Angela develops a program to encourage teachers to value and build on their students' cultural diversity and include learning experiences which encourage biculturalism. The program includes educating students' parents so that they support and encourage the bicultural approach. To maintain this program Angela must monitor it and review and report on its outcomes. She develops these key performance indicators for success:

- ▶ a sense of hope for the future
- ▶ connectedness to the school
- ▶ family support.

Over a six month period, Angela helps teachers provide a bicultural curriculum and meets regularly with parents. To measure the success of her program, she conducts pre- and post-program interviews with the students on their feelings about the three indicators.

She discovers that after the program is completed, the students report a greater sense of hope for the future, stronger feelings of connectedness to the school and a feeling of family support to continue celebrating their culture while also adapting to their new culture.

Angela concludes that her program is reducing the risks to young refugee students. She presents her research findings to the funding body and gains an increase in funding to roll the program out to other schools in the community.

1. What sociocultural factors were considered in developing the program?

Adjust the focus of a program

Sometimes changes in focus may be needed to improve the effectiveness of a program. These could include:

- ▶ identifying and responding to social, cultural and environmental factors which affect the program
- ▶ placing more emphasis on early intervention and capacity building rather than dealing with issues after they arise, preventing rather than curing social ills
- ▶ increasing collaboration and partnerships; for example, between agencies or across industry sectors, with existing communities and groups
- ▶ placing more emphasis on sustainability



Example

Review effectiveness of work undertaken

The process and questions outlined below can be used to review a service or program.

Steps	Questions
1. Identify any aspects of the program or service which are not being achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What is actually happening? ▶ What has gone wrong? ▶ Why has it gone wrong? ▶ What needs to be changed? ▶ How can it be changed?
2. Analyse the issues in terms of what you know about social, cultural and environmental factors relevant to the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What factors have an impact on this program? ▶ How do these factors affect this program? ▶ Have these been taken into account?
3. Identify positives and strengths within the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What has gone right so far? ▶ What positive outcomes have been achieved so far? ▶ What is working well? ▶ Why is it working well?
4. Identify improvements and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What else do we need to do to make this program viable? ▶ What things need to be changed or done differently? ▶ How can we make these changes?