

Working with Male Perpetrators of Domestic Violence from the Rohingya Community

By Craig Pinchbeck and Grant Thorp

Background on the Rohingya Community

- Linguistically, religiously and culturally distinct group in Myanmar who self-identify as Rohingya.
- Predominately from the Rakhine State in Myanmar.



Experiences of the Rohingya Community in Myanmar

- Lack of access to medical care
- Lack of access to education
- Statelessness
- Violence
- Sexual Assault
- Discrimination



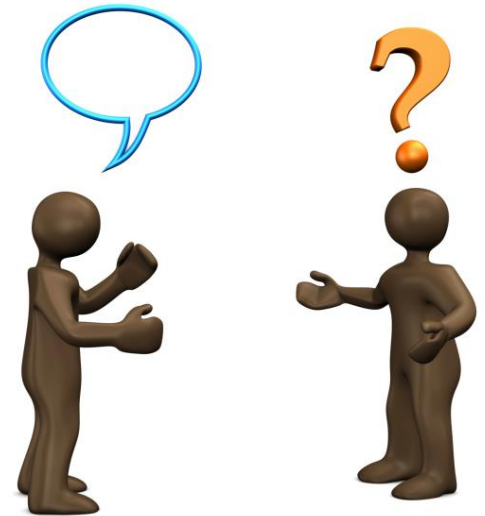
CALD Families in the Lakemba CSC Catchment



- 66.9% of adults living in Lakemba and Wiley Park were born overseas.
- 13.4% and 1.1% born in Bangladesh and Burma respectively.
- 69.8% speak a language other than English
- 14.7% report not speaking English well or at all.
- Services identify Lakemba as one of the predominate locations in which Rohingya families settle.

Challenges in finding appropriate supports

- Language barriers
- Culturally inappropriate services
- Lack of awareness
- BUT...services have been responsive and established supports aimed at CALD families.



Domestic Violence in the Lakemba CSC Catchment

- 141% increase of domestic violence assaults over 15 years in the Canterbury and Bankstown LGAs.
- CALD families may be underrepresented.
- ROSH reports for Lakemba CSC often contain domestic violence concerns as primary or secondary reported concern.

Addressing Domestic Violence Concerns

- Includes counselling, advocacy, housing and legal supports for women who are victims.
- Men's behaviour change programs to address their use of violence.
- When services cannot be accessed to address these issues it can prevent change for the family.

What this means for families and casework

- Loss of momentum while waiting for appropriate services.
- ‘Casework drift’ and acclimatising to the risk.
- Confusion for families
- Family may feel that things have changed and no longer need to be addressed.



Identifying Supports to Work with Male Rohingya Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

- Consulted DV services and CALD and refugee/asylum seeker services.
- Attempted to consult with Burmese Rohingya Community Australia (BRCA).
- Discussion at interagency meetings and with a working party for supporting the Rohingya community.
- Led to collaboration with Baptist Care.

Organising the Program

- Lakemba School as Community Centre offered to host the sessions.
- Settlement Services International identified another Rohingya man to include in the program.
- Consistent in person interpreter for sessions.

Men's Behaviour Change

- Run according to set of minimum standards.
- Standards require:
 - Male and Female facilitator
 - Program of 12 weeks or more
- Approved program
- We were not doing this!

What were we doing?

- Raising awareness
- Seeking to do this in a culturally sensitive way by using the language of the men
- Seeking to challenge the culture of male entitlement and privilege which drives Domestic and Family Violence.

Challenges

- Language and use of interpreter
- No written language
- Trauma background of the men
- Shame of being singled out
- Violence back home
- Other priorities for the men

Program

- Week 1-Types of abuse and violence
- Week 2-Bodily responses to anger
- Week 3-The cycle of violence
- Week 4-Communication styles

How did it go?

- Challenging-possibly started with one of the most difficult groups.
- High attrition rate.
- But worthwhile!
- A model worth pursuing with other CALD communities.

Positive Outcomes

- No further ROSH reports
- Community Services were able to close the plans for these families.

Lessons for Future Programs

- If possible, Rohingya facilitators
- Further time spent with interpreters
- Increased attempts to consult with members of the local Rohingya community
- Community wide sessions may be possible

Questions?

