

# Tips for Careworkers: Culturally Responsive Care – Communication



**What it is:** Culture describes the beliefs and behaviours that are part of social groups.

Culturally responsive care pays attention to the social and cultural characteristics of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

It is a form of person-centred care and how we talk with people is important.

**Why it matters:** Health care that respects a person's cultural and spiritual heritage can positively impact overall health.

**What I need to know:** Many older Australians were born in a non-English-speaking country.

Across all cultures, what is normal to one person may not be normal to another. This may also be true for people within the same cultural group or even the same family. The only way to know is to ask.

Providing culturally responsive care at the end of life requires:

- careworkers to be aware of the influence of their own cultural beliefs on their practice
- sensitivity to the cultural practices and beliefs of others.

## Note

A person may prefer another family member or community member with them when possible and/or to speak on their behalf.

## Do

Respect the rules about what part of the body you can and cannot touch.

## Do

Build rapport and trust by:

- listening actively
- showing empathy and respect.

## Do

Ask the family what the illness means to the person and to the family.

## Do

Be open and ask the older person:

- how they would like to be called
- what is appropriate physical contact
- what special days are important to them
- what food is culturally appropriate to eat.

## Do

Let nursing/supervisory staff know if English is not a person's first language. Professional interpreting services can help with discussions where lots of information is shared.

**Name:**

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## My reflections:

How many of the people I care for speak a language other than English? How many of the people I work with speak a language other than English?

What are some of the ways that help me communicate well with people from a CALD background?

## My notes:

See related palliAGED Practice  
Tip Sheets:  
First Australians - Communication  
People with Specific Needs  
Person-Centred Care

For references and the latest version of all Tip Sheets visit  
**[www.palliaged.com.au/PracticeTipSheets](http://www.palliaged.com.au/PracticeTipSheets)**