

BRIDGING THE GAP

PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE IN REFUGEE CHILD & FAMILY HEALTH

NEWSLETTER #11 AUGUST 2016

“With courage let us all combine”.

THE THEME FROM REFUGEE WEEK 2016, TAKEN FROM THE SECOND VERSE OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Celebrations at Healthy Happy Beginnings

Refugee week is an annual week-long celebration of the positive contributions that people of refugee background make to Australian society. Hundreds of events are held around Australia, including concerts, fundraisers, film screenings and more.

The team providing the Werribee-based program Healthy Happy Beginnings celebrated refugee week by sharing lunch together. Waan, the program’s refugee mentor (bicultural worker) read a book to everyone (women and staff) about the plight of the Karen people and their journey to Melbourne. The women shared their stories of the time they had spent in refugee camps, detention centres, and transiting through other countries. We learnt a song in Karen that was about non-discrimination and accepting everyone for their differences no matter what race, religion culture. As a gesture of thanks to the staff for providing the program tailored to the needs of Karen women, a gift was provided to staff – a traditional sarong. Enjoying lunch together was a fitting way to work towards the key aims of Healthy Happy Beginnings, to increase health professional’s knowledge and cultural awareness, and to foster the inclusion and sense of belonging for Karen women and their families in Melbourne’s west.



Healthy Happy Beginnings group celebration

Building on the MATCH project: a success story

The MATCH program of work has been designed to use existing resources and dovetail existing processes to create better linkages between Maternity and Maternal and Child Health services to ensure women and families of refugee background remain engaged when transitioning from hospital care into the community.

MATCH has continued to build on its success with a new project where women of refugee background are identified in extended postnatal care (EPC) at Dandenong Hospital and referred to City of Greater Dandenong maternal and child health (MCH) has begun. The EPC coordinators and MCH nurses have shared positive feedback commenting that the referral was “easy to do” and that the process “worked really well”; that it is a good way to ensure women “don’t slip through the cracks”.

The process worked well, demonstrated by a referral for an asylum seeker woman and her family who have since seen the maternal and child health service twice. The working group are harnessing the enthusiasm of the staff and upscaling the project to the rest of the EPC team coordinators at Dandenong. Next steps include refining process of referrals of pregnant women in the MCH service into maternity care at Dandenong Hospital.

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

MURDOCH CHILDRENS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE

MONASH HEALTH

WESTERN HEALTH

CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG

CITY OF WYNDHAM

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

MERCY HEALTH

VICSEG NEW FUTURES

Introducing John Antonopoulos

John Antonopoulos is the Operations Manager for interpreters at Monash Health, is a member of the working group involved in the successful Bridging the Gap *Language in Labour* quality improvement project, and a member of the working group and facilitator for Bridging the Gap professional development. We asked John:

What does your role involve?

Patients who have low English proficiency often struggle to comprehend information communicated to them in a health setting. My role involves leading a team of dedicated interpreters and administrative personnel who have the responsibility over the provision of language services across Dandenong Hospital, Casey Hospital, 122 Thomas St and Cranbourne Integrated Care Centre.

Our team seeks to ensure that patients whose preferred language is one other than English are able to access to timely language services. I seek to continually improve upon the provision of languages services to culturally and linguistically diverse patients. I also lead and promote cultural awareness and interpreter awareness workshops for Monash Health highlighting its positive impact on patient care and outcomes.

What aspects of your role are you proud of?

I am particularly proud of the difference that our team makes in providing a 'voice' for those patients who cannot communicate in English when they access health care services at Monash Health. This has been in part achieved by developing a web based Interpreter Booking system, which seeks to centralise the provision of all interpreter requests to better cater to patients language needs across Monash Health. I have also developed an online interpreter awareness training tool to allow staff at any point in time to complete with a certificate of successful completion provided upon the passing of a quiz.

What are your hopes for Bridging the Gap?

I truly hope that the hard work undertaken with Bridging the Gap will translate into long term

improvements to patient care for refugees and asylum seekers both now and into the future. The evidence demonstrates that when patients receive information in their preferred language they are more involved in their care and have better health outcomes.



John Antonopoulos

Pregnancy group workshop at Dandenong

Group pregnancy care is coming to Dandenong for Afghan women, starting mid-August 2016! The team working together to provide this program came together for the first time on 28th July for a professional development workshop. The team comprises a bicultural worker, two midwives and an interpreter supported by a refugee health midwife liaison and community volunteers.

We reviewed the vision, principles and aims, developed last year. The team identified that a major aim of the program that they would like to achieve is to build social connections amongst the participating women and build a sense of social inclusion. The values underpinning the program include

- A welcoming and safe environment
- Communication
- Empowering women
- Teamwork

These sound simple, yet planning how to do this, in the context of a busy clinical environment is challenging. Identifying a range of scenarios helped the team to problem solve how they will work together to bring these values to life.

The team is ready to get underway and to try out this new way of working with Afghan women.

Resources for learning and inspiration

There is a plethora of information and resources out there to inspire; whether it be with regards to the science of quality improvement, applying that science to strengthen future health systems for population health and equity, or opportunities to learn and reflect on your work with families of refugee background; we thought we would share just a few with you:

IHI – the Institute for Healthcare Improvement

This is a wonderful resource for information about transforming health through quality improvement. Focussing on the science of quality improvement and with case studies, tools and resources, and free online tutorials to explain the fundamentals, this web-resource and collaborative is a great place to learn how to nurture an environment of change. We found this page a good place to start:

<http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/HowtoImprove/default.aspx>

The Health Foundation

Is a UK-based initiative that aims to build skills and knowledge to bring about systems change for population health. Whilst being NHS focussed there are some great shared learnings that make this site worth checking out and subscribing to:

<http://www.health.org.uk/>

Foundation House professional development

A program of professional development for the second half of 2016 is now available. With courses covering practitioner self-care and the refugee and asylum seeker experience, please see here for more information and registration details:

<http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/2016-program-calendar-2/>

Bridging the Gap is also pleased to announce another day of professional development in the south east. The day will be held on Friday 7th October at City of Greater Dandenong

Civic Offices. Please email bridgingthegap@mcri.edu.au for more details.

Refugee and asylum seeker settlement in Victoria: FAQs for key services and sector partners – DHHS

In recognition of the recent national immigration and policy changes, the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services have developed a resource to support those working in refugee and asylum seeker health. Bridging the Gap is mentioned amongst other key service and sector partners working in this space. Please see here for more: <http://bit.ly/2ajNKbE>

About Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap is a partnership between Healthy Mothers Healthy Families research group at Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (Foundation House), maternity and maternal & child health services in Melbourne's south east and west, primary health care networks, local and state government.

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For more information about Bridging the Gap: <https://www.mcri.edu.au/bridging-the-gap>
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