Handout 16: Skills for Working with People from a CALD Background

If you were a worker at an agency, and a person from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background walked into your service to seek help for a relative who had a mental illness, you would need to utilise the following:

- Do not make assumptions about English proficiency, either verbal or written - check understanding
- Use of plain English - avoid jargon and slang
- Talk slowly and clearly (not loudly), and without being patronising
- Check that the person has understood the message you are sending
- Take time to explore issues
- Exercise sensitivity when using interpreters - some people may be reluctant to discuss sensitive topics in front of another member of their community. Check with the consumer which family/community members they wish to involve in discussions and treatment
- Do not make negative comments about religious beliefs and practice