Young Refugees

It is important to understand the experience of young refugees. Often they face challenges which relate to their experiences of life before arriving in Australia and then adapting to a new culture. How familiar are you with the cultural identity of residents within your community? Often your local government will have statistics about the cultural background of the community. It is important to be aware of these demographic trends, as often there may be a movement of new migrants or refugees into the community.

Here are some issues for you to consider when working with young refugees.

- Young refugees may have had interrupted schooling and they may not speak or write English sufficiently. This may lead to difficulties with the Australian education system. Therefore, drop out rates may be high.
- Some young people are living in Australia without their natural parents. Often they may be traumatised from their experiences of war
- Often these young people are isolated and may not have access to support services and recreational facilities in the community.
- Many young people may lack information about employment and future education opportunities. They may be unfamiliar about what services are available for young people and how to access these services.
- Young people may often be caught between two different cultures, ie trying to adapt to a new community and coping with family expectations that they follow their own traditions. This may create conflict between the young person and their family.