Encouraging Conversations About Culture:
Supporting Culturally Responsive Family Dispute Resolution

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Encouraging Conversations About Culture: Supporting Culturally Responsive Family Dispute Resolution

In 2008 CatholicCare Sydney and Anglicare Sydney commissioned Dr Susan Armstrong of the University of Western Sydney to conduct a research project to examine culturally responsive family dispute resolution. CatholicCare Sydney and Anglicare Sydney operate Family Relationship Centres in the Sydney suburbs of Bankstown and Parramatta respectively. Both of these locations are characterized by high levels of cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity, as well as socio-economic disadvantage.

Recognising the diversity of our local communities and our commitment to ensuring our services are accessible and responsive, the research project explored two key areas – practices to enhance access to family dispute resolution services by people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities; and identifying the core components of effective culturally sensitive family dispute resolution practice. The research report Culturally Responsive Family Dispute Resolution in Family Relationship Centres: Access and Practice – containing over 30 recommendations – was officially launched by the Commonwealth Attorney General the Hon Robert McClelland at the Bankstown Family Relationship Centre in February 2011.

Recent government policy initiatives have emphasized the importance of services effectively responding to the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged families. These include families vulnerable to poor outcomes such as those experiencing high conflict separation and divorce, and population groups who may experience difficulties accessing and using services, including families from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The next stage of our research focus, culminating in this report – Encouraging Conversations about Culture: Supporting Culturally Responsive Family Dispute Resolution, extends our original project and explores the important practices that support family dispute resolution professionals to develop the confidence and skills to provide a culturally responsive service and practice. Strategies and practices that enhance the responsiveness and effectiveness of family dispute resolution services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities significantly contribute to better practice and to improved responses for vulnerable and disadvantaged families and populations that may experience challenges with accessing and using services.

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Executive summary
In 2008 CatholicCare Sydney and Anglicare Sydney initiated research to investigate how Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) managed in western Sydney could provide culturally responsive and accessible family dispute resolution (FDR).

The first report of the research explored two issues: how FRCs could enhance access for families from culturally diverse communities, and how they could implement culturally responsive family dispute resolution (Armstrong, 2010a). This second research stage reported here sought to ask family dispute resolution professionals what would support them to develop a culturally responsive service and practice. The research used mixed methods: an online survey (n = 219) and interviews with FDR professionals (n = 21).

The research identified a significant commitment among FDR professionals to culturally responsive practice, a high level of self-reported cultural responsiveness by FDR professionals, and a strong desire to be supported in this with a range of resources and professional development strategies. Almost all participants agreed it was important to provide culturally responsive FDR, and three in four agreed they felt culturally responsive in their FDR work. The research highlighted particular areas of need and focus:

- less experienced FDR professionals reported significantly less confidence responding to cultural contexts in FDR;
- Legal Aid FDR professionals also reported significantly less confidence responding to cultural contexts in some FDR domains. They were significantly less likely to agree that Legal Aid Commissions were adequately resourced to engage with communities from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, or that the Commissions had developed referral processes with CALD communities or with faith communities;
- administrative officers working in FDR services were significantly less likely to agree that they felt culturally responsive, less likely to agree it was important to be culturally responsive and less likely to agree they would like to further develop this capacity in their FDR work;
- FDR professionals who had worked for more than five years in their role were significantly less likely to agree that professional development activities and resources would enhance their cultural responsiveness.

The research identified a very strong desire among most FDR professionals to further develop culturally responsive FDR practice and service. The strategies suggested by research participants as most useful to deepen their understanding of culture in FDR involve collaborative conversations with their colleagues and with people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The research demonstrated a clear preference for collaborative reflective learning models and other narrative approaches that foster conversations about culture in FDR. These processes have the potential to be readily adapted to existing debriefing and supervision practices and to be inclusive of all FDR professionals: FDR practitioners, intake and administrative officers and managers.

The research also highlighted the importance of FDR services engaging ethically and effectively with cultural and faith communities to facilitate mutual understandings and to support individuals to make informed service choices. The purposes, complexities and challenges of this kind of engagement needs to be better understood, and supported with adequate resources and dedicated roles as it has the potential to be of significant value to separating families in CALD communities and to the emerging FDR profession.
The report recommends that:

1. FDR services should develop creative strategies to enhance the cultural responsiveness of FDR administrative officers.

2. FDR services should monitor and support the development of newly appointed FDR professionals’ cultural responsiveness, in the context of their overall professional development.

3. Legal Aid Commissions should explore ways of enhancing the confidence and capacity of their FDR professionals to respond to culture in FDR.

4. The six core competencies of the Vocational Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution should include more of the competencies present in the diversity and cultural context electives of the Family Relationships Qualification Framework.

5. FDR services should establish appropriate channels of mutual communication and referral with cultural and faith communities and their leaders and services.

6. FDR services should examine the merits and risks of creating community liaison or facilitation roles to assist engagement with CALD communities.

7. FDR funding agencies should review the purposes, complexities and challenges of community engagement and should fund FDR services appropriately for community engagement.

8. FDR funding agencies should identify and promote examples of good practice engagement with CALD communities.

9. FDR funding agencies and FDR services should audit existing parenting education resources and strategies to identify effective ways to enhance the participation of CALD parents in post separation parenting education programs.

10. FDR funders and FDR services support the development of collaborative reflective professional learning models and resources to foster the skills and understandings needed to normalise the consideration of culture as part of every FDR process.
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Research context
2.1 Family Dispute Resolution

Family dispute resolution (FDR) is a form of family mediation largely to help separating or separated parents resolve disagreements about their children’s care. In 2006 Australian legal reforms required that disputing parents must attend FDR before they could approach a court to resolve their differences. About a third of separating parents attempted family dispute resolution or mediation between 2006 and 2008 (Kaspiew et al, 2009, 110).

In 2008-09 federally funded Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) conducted about 25,000 FDR sessions, non-FRC community based services offered FDR to almost 7,000 clients, and nearly 3,000 cases were closed by the Telephone Dispute Resolution Service (Department of Families and Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs [FaHCSIA], 2010a; FaHCSIA, 2010b). Legal Aid Commissions in each state held 7,000 FDR conferences in 2007-08 (KPMG, 2008). Private mediation services and practitioners also conduct FDR, although the numbers for this are not collated centrally.

Family dispute resolution is subject to dual influences: the legal and policy frameworks of federal family law, and the program requirements of the Commonwealth Family Support Program (FSP) which implements elements of national social policy. All FSP funded programs, including FRCs, are required to offer accessible, equitable and responsive services, and to engage groups that may have barriers to access, including families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds (FaHCSIA, 2006). FSP services are currently required to develop strategies to enhance accessibility, responsiveness and outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families, including those from CALD backgrounds (FaHCSIA, 2011a; 2011b). These goals reflect social justice commitments to encourage access to universal government programs, especially for marginalised groups (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA), 1998; DIMA, 2010). The Australian Government recognizes the importance of ensuring access to the federal civil justice system by individuals from CALD communities (Australian Government Attorney-General’s Department, 2009) and the Family Law Council has recently reported on strategies to enhance access to and provision of culturally appropriate family law services (Family Law Council, 2012).

There is still a gap in achieving equal access to FDR, and families from CALD backgrounds are underrepresented as FDR clients. The reasons for this are not well understood (Armstrong, 2010b; but see Ojelabi et al, 2011). There also appear to be gaps in family relationship service provision to people from CALD backgrounds and a lack of confidence by staff to engage with CALD clients (Colmar Brunton Social Research, 2004; Kaspiew et al, 2009; KPMG, 2008; Urbis Keys Young, 2004). In a newly developing field such as family dispute resolution, there is a significant need for continuing professional development to enrich practice, keep up with changes and strengthen compliance. At the same time, the uneven capacity of small organisations to respond fully to the needs of all cultural groups should be appreciated (KPMG, 2008; Urbis Keys Young, 2004).

2.2 Culture, mediation and FDR

Culture is a complex and highly contested concept, yet widely acknowledged as crucially important. Briggs observes that in the dispute resolution field it is ‘commonly described as a way of life or meaning making linked with a range of attributes including race, religion, language, belief and, more recently, with profession, education and gender’ (Brigg & Muller, 2009, 124). The breadth of this explanation indicates the omnipresence and reach of culture, but also represents it as both vague and imprecise. If the purpose of defining culture is ‘to categorise and describe human difference’ (Brigg & Muller, 2009, 126), others caution that it is also important to appreciate that culture is not a thing, but a social and cognitive process; neither homogenous nor static; not universally distributed or uniformly experienced; and that we all possess several cultures (Avruch, 1998, 14-16).

In mediation scholarship and practice, culture has been recognised as influencing the methods of and assumptions underpinning the dispute resolution model, what parties and practitioners bring to the process, and how they engage in it. If culture is conceptualised as a process of meaning-making, it will influence how issues are conceived, how parties communicate, and ‘how identities and meanings play out’ in negotiating the issues (Le Baron & Pillay, 2006, 16; Avruch, 1998). Cultural influences are not easy to discern, especially among those who share the same cultural context, and are most often visible when “thrown into relief by the quality of difference” (Avruch, 1998, 58, emphasis in original).
As cultural influences are often outside our awareness, practitioners need to pay conscious attention to them and their effect on the mediation process. Awareness of cultural norms and processes inherent in the mediation, and brought to it by both the practitioner and the parties, will assist the mediator to engage in respectful dialogue about cultural contexts, respond ethically to the cultural power dynamics present in the mediation and to support party control (Brigg & Muller, 2009; Astor, 2005; Astor, 2007). Cognisance of culture will also help family dispute resolution practitioners to understand how to fulfil their ethical and legal obligations to support children’s cultural rights and best interests in FDR (Rhoades et al, 2008; Armstrong, 2011b).

2.3 Culturally responsive service provision

The commitment to culturally responsive programming reflects a trend in the last 50 years, prominent in business, health and human service sectors, to ensure that service providers are culturally competent (Sinicrope et al, 2007). Cultural competence is a term given to the systemic, organisational and professional behaviours, attitudes and policies that enable effective and appropriate service delivery to individuals from non-dominant cultural groups (Cross, 1989). Culturally competent workers ‘build on and subsume’ cultural awareness (knowledge of cultural norms) and cultural sensitivity (recognition of diversity within cultural groups) to develop an appreciation of their own cultural norms and of the dynamism, complexity and importance of cultural contexts (Sawrikar& Katz, 2008, 14; Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV), 2006). They neither overvalue nor undervalue culture, but see it as an important dimension of individual and community identity and their processes of meaning-making.

An industry has arisen to foster, monitor and assess cultural competence. A wide range of cultural self-assessment tools has been developed for individuals, organisations and professions. These tools are informed by a broad range of theories and demonstrate neither conceptual consistency nor clarity (Sinicrope et al, 2007). The tools have been devised for many purposes: for example, for evaluating intercultural communicative competence at a point in time (Ruben 1976); for explaining how people construe cultural difference and how this changes over time (Paige 2003; Hammer, 2008); for measuring cultural awareness or adaptability before and following training or study abroad programs (Schulz, 2007). Those resources aimed at assessing cultural competence in specific professional domains such as counselling or health care (Jones et al, 2004; Khanna et al, 2009) are limited in their transferability. Most are self-reports assessed by survey, but some involve observation, interview, portfolio or performance.

While these tools identify some of the parameters and trajectory of cultural competence, the discussion by Sinicrope et al (2007) suggests weaknesses that may limit their efficacy: the questions used are sometimes ethnocentric, contrived, patronising or self-serving; they frequently assume a static and reified concept of culture; they often equate culture with geography or ethnicity and they generally ignore power dynamics. In addition, the concept of culture underpinning the inquiry is generally unarticulated (Hsueh-Fen et al, 2004), and the complexity of culture and challenges of engaging with cultural difference are often oversimplified (Pruegger and Rogers, 1994). Finally, very few are directed at identifying areas for development or investigating participants’ perceptions of what would enhance their cultural competence.

These imperatives have informed the development of research to investigate culturally responsive and accessible family dispute resolution. The research was initiated by Anglicare Sydney and CatholicCare Sydney which manage two Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) in western Sydney. The local government areas served by Parramatta and Bankstown FRCs are two of the most culturally, religiously, linguistically and ethnically diverse and socio-economically disadvantaged in Sydney.

The findings of the first stage of the research identified good practice by FDR services in enhancing access to families from culturally diverse backgrounds, and in providing culturally responsive FDR (Armstrong 2010a). The second stage of the research reported here seeks to investigate whether and how FDR services and professionals would like to be supported to develop and sustain a culturally responsive service and practice.
The present study
The present study addressed the following questions:

1) Do FDR professionals feel that they are culturally responsive?
2) Do FDR professionals believe that their services are culturally responsive?
3) What would most support FDR professionals to develop or sustain culturally responsive service and practice?
4) How can learning about culture be facilitated in FDR professional contexts?

Ultimately the study aimed to identify appropriate strategies for supporting culturally responsive professional practice which might be implemented by FDR services.

3.1 Design and measures

The researcher used a mixed-methods approach that combined an on-line survey with a semi-structured interview to provide multiple approaches to answer the research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The research was approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (H9173).

3.1.1 Survey

The purpose of the survey was to identify the perceptions of a wide range of FDR professionals about their own and their organisation’s cultural competence, and to identify their views about what might enhance their cultural competence. The survey tool was independently developed by the author. Whilst some categories and items in the present survey were modeled on existing cultural self-assessment tools, it was tailored to the Australian family dispute resolution context and drew on domains identified by prior research conducted by the author about culturally responsive FDR practice (Armstrong, 2010a).

The survey comprised six parts:

- demographic information (10 items);
- information about the professional context in which participants worked (15 items);
- participants’ perceptions of the cultural competence of the service in which they worked (25 items);
- self-perceptions of cultural competence in the FDR context (23 items);
- participants’ willingness to further develop cultural competence (3 items);
- identification of factors, activities and abilities that would enhance their cultural competence (34 items).

The questions about self-perceptions of cultural competence were framed to identify participants’ confidence assisting FDR clients from culturally diverse backgrounds, as well as to rate their confidence in understanding and managing the cultural dynamics of FDR processes.

Participants rated their responses to the questions in the final four parts of the survey on a six point Likert scale: strongly agree [1], agree [2], neutral [3], disagree [4], strongly disagree [5], unsure [6]. Optional open-ended questions asked participants to identify other factors, activities and abilities that they thought could support their cultural competence. The survey was piloted with FDR staff from two Family Relationship Centres and the wording and content were adjusted following their feedback.

3.1.2 Semi-structured interview

Survey participants were also invited to participate in a follow-up half hour telephone interview. Participants provided written informed consent prior to participation in this part of the research. The interview explored participants’ experience of ‘moments of real learning about culture’, and how others in their service or practice could achieve the same kind of real learning. Qualitative inquiry is particularly powerful for understanding and evaluating the how and why of process, in this case the process of learning about culture. This combination of multiple methodological practices in a single study ‘adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness and depth’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p8).
3.2 Procedure

Potential participants were identified from the Commonwealth Attorney General’s public on-line register of family dispute resolution practitioners (FDRPs). The register lists 763 FDRPs, comprising individual practitioners and institutional FDR providers which may employ as few as one FDRP or more than 100. Most FDR providers include an email address in the register and where this was not provided, it was obtained by telephoning. The elimination of duplicates listed on the register and of FDRPs for whom an email address could not be obtained, resulted in a potential participant pool of 324 individual FDRPs and 178 institutional providers (502 in total). Invitations to participate in the research were emailed with three follow up reminders. Completion of the online survey signified consent to participate in the research. The survey was administered using SurveyMonkey.

3.3 Analysis

The survey data was tabulated and analysed using descriptive statistics for demographic and professional characteristics. Frequencies (number and %) of the rating of all other questions were reported. Differences in survey response by work role, length of time in role and service type were explored using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Post hoc comparisons were made using Bonferroni, Tamhane or Tukey tests. The post hoc test was chosen on the basis of results of Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances. Qualitative data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis (Brown & Clarke, 2006). Meaningful extracts of data were coded using NVivo7 data management software program and subsequently collated into common narrative themes. These themes were conceptually refined following critical review by an independent rater.

3.4 Results

219 FDR professionals completed the survey. Half were FDRPs (53%), with other participants including a mix of managers (also FDRPs) (17%), family service advisors and intake personnel (8%), administrative officers (10%), child consultants and others (both 6%). Slightly more than half worked in FRCs (56%), with 17% from Legal Aid Commissions, 15% in non-government community based FDR providers and 10% were private FDR providers. The catchment of most participants’ service was regional (40%) or city suburban and metropolitan (42%), and 13% offered a state-wide service. One quarter of participants had worked in their FDR role for 5 years or more, a third for 3-4 years, a quarter for 1-2 years and 16% had been working for less than one year. Nearly half (43%) worked for more than 22 hours per week in FDR related activities.

Almost one third of participants (30%) had a law degree and about half (47%) had social science qualifications. Eighty per cent were born in a country where English is the dominant language spoken, including 67% born in Australia. Nineteen per cent said they speak a language other than English at home, and 61% agreed that their cultural identity was important to them. Sixty two per cent indicated a religious affiliation, with half of participants agreeing their religion was important to them. The gender mix was 21% male and 79% female, and 80% of participants were over forty.

Forty participants expressed interest in participating in the telephone interview and 24 returned consent forms. Twenty one interviews were conducted, as others willing to participate could not fit it into their schedule in the period available. The interviews were digitally recorded and the recordings transcribed. Of those interviewed, five were male and 16 female. All except one were registered FDRPs, and five were also working in an FDR managerial capacity. Half of the interviewees (10) were born in Australia, four in English speaking countries, and seven in countries where English is not the dominant language. Nine spoke a language other than English at home. Half those interviewed had law degrees, and the other half had social science qualifications.

3.4.1 Do FDR professionals feel that they are culturally responsive?

Nearly all participants agreed it was important to provide culturally responsive FDR (97% cumulative agreement), with three in four agreeing they felt culturally responsive in their FDR work (76%): see Figure 1.
Participants recorded very high levels of confidence for maintaining impartiality when working with CALD clients, inquiring about clients’ cultural backgrounds, identifying a client’s need for an interpreter and communicating with clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (90%+). Participants also felt very confident identifying their own cultural influences in the FDR process (87%) and helping clients consider their children’s right to enjoy their culture (87%). They felt very confident identifying cultural influences in the FDR process, assisting clients whose religious affiliation differed to their own and identifying the presence of violence with CALD clients (all 85%): see Figure 2.

Participants generally felt confident identifying cross cultural issues in the FDR process, helping CALD clients make decisions in their children’s best interests and working with interpreters (all 82%). They also expressed confidence responding to the dynamics of violence with CALD clients (78%), identifying clients’ cultural communication styles (78%), identifying cultural influences on children’s development and assisting CALD clients (both 77%): see Figure 3.
Less confidence was expressed about:

- helping clients reach FDR outcomes that are culturally appropriate (73%);
- adapting FDR processes to facilitate participation by CALD clients (71%);
- managing cultural power imbalances (70%);
- responding to the cultural dynamics of FDR processes (68%); and
- asking about a client’s religious affiliation (58%), but only a third of participants agreed their services did this: see Figure 4.
ANOVA identified significant differences between professionals. ANOVA showed administrative officers were significantly less likely than all other respondents to report confidence identifying their own cultural influences in the FDR process and significantly less likely to agree with a range of statements about confidence responding to culture in FDR processes: see Table 1 in Appendix 1. ANOVA demonstrated that practitioners with less than one years’ FDR experience were significantly less likely than those with more than five years’ experience to agree they were confident assisting CALD clients, managing cultural power imbalances, adapting FDR processes and responding to domestic violence with CALD clients: see Table 2 in Appendix 1. ANOVA indicated that FDR practitioners working in Legal Aid Commissions were significantly less likely than those in private FDR practice to report confidence communicating with CALD clients, identifying cross cultural issues and cultural influences on child development, managing cultural dynamics in the FDR process, helping clients consider their child’s right to enjoy their culture and assisting clients reach culturally appropriate outcomes: see Table 3 in Appendix 1.

3.4.2 Do FDR professionals believe their organization is culturally responsive?

Whilst most participants said they felt culturally responsive, fewer believed the organisation in which they worked was culturally responsive. Organisational responsiveness was measured in three domains: engagement with CALD communities, professional practice and FDR processes. The areas that participants perceived their organisations were succeeding most were identifying clients’ cultural background at intake or assessment (87%), encouraging professional development (PD) to foster cultural competence (86%), providing cultural awareness training (80%), adopting best practice with interpreters, and considering cultural issues in debriefing and supervision practices (both 77%): see Figure 5.

Participants considered that their organisation’s cultural responsiveness was satisfactory in relation to developing protocols to involve support personnel in the FDR process (70%), identifying obstacles that might limit access to FDR by CALD families (69%), consulting CALD communities about their family relationship and FDR needs (66%), adapting FDR processes to facilitate the participation of CALD clients (65%) and promoting the employment of bi-cultural staff (63%). Only half of the participants agreed that their organisation actively engaged CALD communities (51%), monitored statistics about the use of FDR by CALD clients (51%) and worked in partnership with CALD communities (49%): see Figure 6.
Participants rated their organisations less culturally responsive in the following domains:

- having a dedicated position to promote engagement with CALD communities (44%);
- working with CALD communities to understand community-based dispute resolution (42%);
- developing mutual referral processes with CALD services and communities (40%);
- adapting parenting education programs commonly held prior to FDR (39%); and
- developing protocols to respond to the needs of CALD clients and to involve the extended family in the FDR process (39%).

Not surprisingly, few believed their organisation was adequately resourced to engage with CALD communities (39%). Very few believed their organisation identified the religious background of clients (35%), provided outreach to CALD communities (34%), or had developed mutual referral processes with religious leaders or services (23%); see Figure 7.
There were several issues about which ANOVA showed significant differences between types of organisations. Legal Aid professionals were significantly less likely to agree that their service was adequately resourced to engage with CALD communities or had developed mutual referral processes with local CALD communities and local religious leaders or services. Those working in FRCs were significantly more likely to agree than those in private FDR services that cultural awareness training was provided, and private FDR services were significantly more likely to agree that their organisation had developed protocols to involve the extended family in the FDR process: see Table 4 in Appendix 1.

3.4.3 What would support FDR professionals to be culturally responsive?

Whilst the majority of participants indicated they felt culturally responsive, most wished to further develop their cultural competence (88%). Almost all said they would participate in professional development activities about culturally responsive FDR and use resources if available (both 93%), with nearly 50% strongly agreeing. Administrative officers were significantly less likely to agree with these statements compared with all other roles: see Table 5 in Appendix 1.

Participants agreed that a range of human, information and financial resources as well as professional development activities would support them to develop and sustain culturally responsive practice and service. Professional development (PD) was identified as most important. This included preference for cultural awareness training and external professional development activities (both 92%).

Other factors that participants said would support cultural responsiveness included:

- examples of good practice of working with CALD communities (91%);
- professional development activities specifically designed for their practice (89%);
- accessible information about local cultural organisations, cultural facilitators and cultural resources (88%)
- providing adequate funding for community engagement (87%); and
- appointing staff and FDRPs from culturally diverse backgrounds (83%).
A high proportion also agreed that there should be more emphasis on cultural issues in vocational FDR training (80%); see Figure 8. More experienced FDR professionals (5 years+) were significantly less likely than other participants to agree with these statements, suggesting a greater need among newer FDR personnel for this kind of support: see Table 6.

The professional development activities preferred by participants were forms of collaborative, engaged and experiential learning. Most support was expressed for conversations with CALD community members and agencies about their issues (93%) and participating in collaborative reflective practice and discussion with FDR colleagues about culture and FDR (90%). External professional development and cultural awareness training rated highly (93%), as did service-specific and accessible professional development (89%). Viewing dramatized scenarios, expert commentary, testimonials (84%) and reading case studies, discussion papers, journal articles, power point summaries and opinion pieces (80%) were also considered useful, as was individual structured reflective practice (80%). Less preferred modes of learning included interactive activities such as role plays (69%), action research (66%) and online self-paced activities (57%): see Figure 9.
Despite practitioners expressing relatively high levels of confidence in relation to assisting CALD clients and responding to the cultural dynamics of FDR, there was almost universal support for developing greater understanding of these matters and enhancing professional capacity to do so. Almost all agreed that the following abilities would support their practice and service provision:

- adapting FDR processes to facilitate the participation of CALD clients;
- supporting children’s right to enjoy their culture;
- facilitating children’s best interests in cross cultural contexts;
- managing cultural dynamics in FDR;
- assisting CALD families experiencing DV;
- working with interpreters; and
- developing cultural self-awareness.

More than 90% of participants agreed that better understanding of the following matters would support culturally responsive FDR:

- the role of culture in dispute resolution;
- community-based dispute resolution;
- how to engage CALD communities effectively;
- cultural and religious norms about parenting, separation and family; and
- cultural influences on child development: see Figures 10 and 11.

Some respondents remarked that it was important for FDR professionals to be understand how disputants’ religious and faith beliefs might influence their ability to consider settlement options.
3.4.4 How can learning about culture be facilitated in FDR professional contexts?

The qualitative data discussed here is drawn from the interview responses and open-ended survey responses. The purpose of the interviews was to explore profound moments of learning about culture, and to speculate how this learning might be facilitated and experienced more widely by professionals in an FDR context. Themes in survey responses and discussions about how and what participants had learned about culture concerned the interlocking issues of complexity and commonality, dialogue and self-awareness, collaborative reflection and community engagement. Participant statements are italicized.
3.4.4.1 Complexity and commonality

A pervasive theme concerned the complexity of culture. One remarked that culture was often used by clients to ‘stereotype and simplify things that are very involved and very complex’. Clients will ‘bring culture in … to describe the other parent, or the differences they had in a relationship, to stereotype others and themselves.’ Among practitioners, too, ‘the concept of culture is actually not discussed much anymore. It’s very much accepted as something we know.’ To avoid a ‘compartmentalised, stereotyped kind of approach’ to understanding culture in FDR, culture ‘has to become more complex again. [We] have to question: what do we actually mean with it, where do the concepts come from, what does power mean in that context as well, [and] who do we ask?’

Survey participants cautioned that existing approaches to cultural awareness training often demonstrated superficial understandings of culture and ‘token or lip service’ attitudes to cultural awareness. They questioned the quality of cultural awareness training and trainers that they had experienced. One expressed this strongly saying that the training materials and trainers he had experienced had demonstrated an ‘attitude to cultural diversity [that] was frequently quite cynical. They presumed that males in culturally different groups were likely to be bullies and perpetrators of violence for cultural or religious reasons. My conclusion is that the trainers and training materials need to have their own cultural baggage carefully identified and then neutralised.’ One interviewee remarked that after her experience of cultural awareness training she ‘didn’t walk out of there feeling like I’d learnt anything, other than the really superficial – that there’s lots of different people in the world, and you should not be judgmental of other people’s cultures and other people’s cultural practices.’ Research participants were looking for something that was ‘more tailored to my particular practice’ and which allowed them ‘to drill down a little bit more’ to analyse the complexities of culture in FDR.

The flip side of this awareness of the complexity of culture was a pervasive view of the cultural commonality shared by clients and professionals. One professional remarked that growing up in Australia in a non-dominant cultural context, she had ‘always looked for the commonalities’. Her professional experience listening to stories of clients from a wide range of backgrounds ‘reinforced this perception that underneath it all how much we have in common and how much is the same.’ Another practitioner echoed this theme and concluded ‘everybody does love their kids, everybody still wants to spend time with their kids, nobody wants to have relationship breakdown. [Understanding] that was a key thing for me. … The challenge was to learn how to get past all the cultural stuff to that.’ The reference to ‘all the cultural stuff’ concerned her initial inhibitions about engaging with clients whose cultural background was different to her own because of the ‘fear of me saying or doing something wrong.’ She realized she needed to ‘work harder to find that common ground’, and that, for her, the key to this was to ‘just listen and ask lots of questions, and people are nine times out of ten, happy to answer questions once they know that I’m genuinely trying to help them.’ Another practitioner remarked that her realization that she had shared a common experience with a client, a grandfather from Korea, resulted in ‘a moment of absolute personal connection, … and we were able to discuss things in an authentic way … that [we] hadn’t done before.’ These themes of mindful dialogue and genuine engagement are explored further below.

3.4.4.2 Dialogue and self-awareness

Many of the moments of ‘real learning’ about culture concerned failures of dialogue. This included making unwarranted assumptions and failing to inquire effectively or of systems omissions, like not recording both parties’ Aboriginality on pre-mediation forms. This learning triggered feelings of shock, surprise and embarrassment for some and provided a ‘really tough, potent learning experience’. One queried her failure to ask ‘that question in the right way, to find out that no, there is no way she wanted to be in the same room as him. … How could I have missed that?’ Others talked about making assumptions that parties understood domestic violence but realising as the work proceeded that the concept was not being translated adequately, or was simply not understood. Another participant discussed his experience of consulting members of a recently arrived community, and regretted his ‘assumption that I can just barge in and start talking about what they need to do, … as opposed to giving them time and space to tell me what they think and create a dialogue.’
To remedy failures in communication, and to strengthen an appreciation of the role of culture in this, interviewees suggested engaging in authentic and mindful dialogue with parties to get to know them and what was important to them. This required professionals to avoid assumptions and be ‘open and ask questions, and [know] how and what sorts of questions to ask’. This kind of open, inquiring attitude may assist practitioners to approach ‘every session as an intercultural session … where different cultures meet and probably just be tentative and curious about how people use culture much more than what it is.’ Dialogue required that professionals reach out to find common ground, to ‘develop compassion’, to interact ‘from an authentic base, a sense of humility.’ One remarked that the capacity to engage in authentic dialogue ‘comes from a deeper level than just questioning. I think it comes from a sense of acceptance and non-judgement from within the practitioner.’

The concept of dialogue was central to the process of developing and refining cultural responsiveness. Interviewees suggested it was essential for professionals to have conversations with themselves about culture, ‘to focus your attention on the questions that you constantly have to ask yourself.’ These conversations with self required practitioners to be aware of their own influences on the client and the process, to be ‘really, really, really present in the situation … being more aware of how they bring their own culture into the discussions, even in the way they ask questions.’ Others reinforced the importance of ‘self-awareness: knowing personal prejudices, biases, alignments and how to maintain the link of humanity that sits above the cultural conditioning and rigid beliefs (often unconsciously) of self and others.’ This greater self-awareness assists practitioners to know their own influences, and also assists them to understand ‘what we practice’, and how it might be adapted to facilitate client participation. One thought it also clarified the limits of his professional practice and made him more confident to say ‘look this is what we can do, … we are more than happy to engage and try to work with that. If you need something a bit different, we might not be the people who can offer it.’

3.4.4.3 Collaborative reflection

Participants frequently highlighted that their preferred learning context was the conversations that they had with colleagues – either informally, or more formally in debriefing, supervision and peer supervision meetings and with the wider FDR or mediation community. As one explained, conversation with colleagues ‘sharpens what you think, what you do, and focuses your attention again to the questions that you constantly have to ask yourself.’ Another said that she ‘gets so much out of’ the opportunity to reflect with her peers. This preference for collaborative dialogue and reflection as an effective learning method and context to explore culture was reinforced by participant recommendations of ‘narrative’ approaches to mediation and supervision. One observed that ‘it’s in the meeting of people’ that understanding is deepened. Narrative techniques facilitated clients to tell their ‘cultural story [which] might just be one story of many others.’ Narrative forms of supervision encourage ‘open curiosity and witnessing and little skills … that together allow people to reflect in a way that’s outside their normal way of thinking.’

One participant explained that effective professional development about culture should take the ‘form of group experiential reflections’ because ‘culture is a living experience, and is not something cognitively or intellectually driven.’ Whilst it was important to anchor and examine understandings of culture in lived experience, the professional consideration of culture in FDR also needs to be overt, structured and informed. A participant explained that we are often not conscious of culture until ‘we actually sit in the room with people who are obviously born somewhere else or [who] look differently’… [so] it has to start somewhere. … Somebody has … to bring [culture] into a session’. The collaborative process should also be informed, and not simply experiential. As one manager remarked, ‘the most direct way to influence people’s behaviour, is actually through discussion, but informed discussion.’
Community engagement and capacity building

The themes of dialogue and collaboration were also evident in interviewees’ awareness that genuine and mutual engagement with cultural communities, despite its many challenges, was the most potent source of learning for communities and for FDR providers. One remarked that to deepen her understanding of culture in FDR, she ‘would appreciate actually hearing the stories from people within those communities.’ Several expressed the view that the most effective way to learn about cultural communities, and for people in communities to appreciate FDR, was to be involved in ‘community education and development, like the outreach component, to go out to those communities.’ This needed to be done with care and consultation, to avoid raising unrealistic expectations, and to ensure capacity to sustain the connection. As one noted, ‘a lot of communities have expressed their frustration about this. He explained that people from these communities have said to him ‘we have been over consulted but where does [the consultation] go?’ Interviewees expressed the need for stronger relationships between FDR providers and cultural communities. This ‘needs continuity and persistence’, as it ‘takes a lot of time to develop the relationships where they feel safe and they can trust others.’ Another explained the challenges of sustaining relationships with communities noting, ‘at different times we’ve developed different relationships, but then we might get busy or the person we were talking to moves on, and we lose that and … we don’t have the resources to keep going out there.’

A number of strategies were suggested to facilitate community engagement with limited resources. Some talked about ‘creative engagement’ and learning from the kind of ‘amazing community development activities’ run by Community Legal Centres ‘on a shoestring budget.’ Others suggested ‘targeting women because they’ll soon take the information back to their communities.’ Many referred to the value of appointing ‘cultural liaison officers’ to facilitate and sustain relationships with communities. Caution was expressed about the need to make liaison roles clear, and to ensure such workers were effectively supported. However, there was also a view that it was unrealistic to expect FDR providers to sustain engagement with CALD communities, or to provide a ‘holistic service’, without appropriate resources. As one observed, ‘we’re really not set up to be able to follow it through. I mean we try but it’s difficult. … If we had the resources or the people who are able to do these things it would be fine.’

A key reason for CALD community engagement was to build the capacity of leaders and CALD community services to make appropriate referrals and to facilitate individuals making appropriate service choices. A number remarked on the need for ‘wider scale education to CALD communities about FDR, Australian Family Law and family support services’. Others thought it important that there was a ‘two-way exchange of information about FDR … and the impact of culture on FDR’. This mutuality extended to communicating with community leaders to understand how they settle disputes within their communities, and investigating if these processes may be adapted into FDR practice. A number commented on the need for ‘resources for clients that reflect their cultural background and/or language’, and recognise that many CALD communities, particularly new and emerging communities, have a strong oral culture and are not always literate in their own language.
Discussion and implications
This research has been directed at identifying FDR professionals’ views about what would support them to develop and sustain a culturally responsive service and practice. It is clear that most consider this important, and wish to enhance their capacity in this area. The findings above suggest several strategies which have the potential to facilitate and support cultural responsiveness in FDR.

4.1 Engaging with culture in FDR

Most participants rated themselves as culturally responsive and generally confident about assisting CALD clients and understanding and responding to culture in FDR. This result may not be surprising among a group who self-selected to participate in the research and, it may be deduced, demonstrate a high degree of commitment to cultural responsiveness. The high positive ratings are inconsistent with recent research in which family relationship service professionals, especially those in FRCs, expressed a lack of confidence about engaging with CALD clients compared with other types of clients (Kaspiew et al, 2009, 54-55). High survey scores have been explained in other contentious service contexts, such as providing counselling to gay, lesbian and bisexual people, and may reflect a lack of training or awareness (Grove, 2009). High confidence scores may also indicate ‘self-deceptive positivity’ (Dillon & Worthington, 2003, 248), similar to the tendency to give socially desirable answers (Aldridge, 2001), although this tendency has not been marked in earlier studies on intercultural sensitivity (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). The high confidence scores in this survey also sit incongruously with participants’ strongly expressed desire for further support to provide culturally responsive FDR.

4.1.1 Administrative officers

Cultural self-awareness has consistently been identified as an essential attribute of cultural competence (Bhui, 2007; O’Hagan, 2001; Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). While most in this survey reported confidence identifying their own cultural influences in the FDR process, administrative officers did not. Administrative officers were also significantly less likely to agree that it was important to provide culturally responsive FDR, and less willing to participate in professional development activities concerning culture. This may suggest that administrative officers lack a fuller appreciation of cultural dynamics in FDR generally, and may not realise the significance of culture in FDR, or the impact of their own cultural influences in their engagement with clients. As administrative officers are likely to be the initial point of contact for many clients, and may represent the ‘face’ of the organisation, it is important they engage with all clients fairly and sensitively. Creative strategies may need to be developed to enhance the cultural responsiveness of administrative officers, as they appear not to appreciate its importance and may be resistant to further engaging with it. Imaginative initiatives to address racism and support diversity adapted for the FDR and the human services context may offer promise here (Trenerry, et al, 2010).

4.1.2 Less experienced and Legal Aid FDR professionals

Two other groups reported significantly less confidence on several important domains: FDR professionals who had been in their role for less than a year and Legal Aid FDR professionals. It is not surprising that less experienced FDR professionals were less confident, as they are struggling to develop mastery in their FDR practice. But it does reinforce the need to continue to monitor and support new FDR professionals’ cultural responsiveness, in the context of their overall professional development.

Legal Aid professionals also expressed less confidence recognising and responding to some cultural domains in FDR. This is consistent with some of the findings of a recent review of Legal Aid’s family dispute resolution (KPMG, 2008). Each state based Legal Aid Commission offers a different non-litigious dispute resolution model, have different schemes of mediator employment, and varying opportunities for mediator professional development. A relatively high proportion of Legal Aid clients are drawn from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Hunter 1998; Hunter et al, 2006), and it would benefit these clients and the professionalism of Legal Aid FDR staff, to explore ways of enhancing their confidence and capacity to respond to culture in FDR (KPMG, 2008). Promising initiatives are underway in some Legal Aid Commissions, such as facilitating the training of FDRP’s from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Lord, 2011).

Legal Aid FDRPs are also lawyers and, unlike social science trained professionals, may not have had the same opportunity in their education or professional experience to explicitly consider the role that culture may play in family dispute resolution. Both findings highlight the desirability of ensuring that all future FDRPs engage deeply with cultural dynamics in FDR in the vocational graduate diploma for that qualification, and that strategies are put in place to enhance their cultural confidence after their appointment as FDRPs. Consideration should be given to incorporating more of the competencies present in the electives dealing with diversity and cultural context into the compulsory units of the vocational training for FDRPs (Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council, 2007).
4 Discussion and implications

Recommendations

1. FDR services should develop creative strategies to enhance the cultural responsiveness of FDR administrative officers.

2. FDR services should monitor and support the development of newly appointed FDR professionals’ cultural responsiveness, in the context of their overall professional development.

3. Legal Aid Commissions should explore ways of enhancing the confidence and capacity of their FDR professionals to respond to culture in FDR.

4. The six core competencies of the Vocational Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution should include more of the competencies present in the diversity and cultural context electives of the Family Relationships Qualification Framework.

4.2 Enhancing organisational capacity to foster conversations with CALD and faith communities and families

4.2.1 Establishing mutual referral processes with CALD and faith communities

Whilst most participants agreed that they felt culturally responsive in most domains, they did not rate their organisations as highly. Fewer than half of participants, especially Legal Aid professionals, agreed that FDR services were adequately resourced to engage with CALD communities. Nor did they believe their organisations had developed satisfactory mutual referral processes with CALD communities or with faith based communities. This caution is not surprising. There may be a reluctance to reinforce the tendency in some cultural and faith communities to discourage separation and divorce and pressure estranged couples to reconcile (Armstrong, 2010a; Legal Services Commission of South Australia (LSCSA) 2006, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c). Women in particular may feel obliged to comply with religious and cultural expectations. The links between culture and religion are not well understood, and it has been suggested that many find it difficult to distinguish the two, especially at times of family crisis (Armstrong, 2010a). Religious leaders and faith based services play an important role for the religiously observant, those nominally committed to their faith, and especially for men, in supporting relationships, assisting couples to resolve problems, and referring people to family relationship services (Armstrong, 2010a; Kaspiew, 2009; Macfarlane, 2012). It is important therefore that this role is fully appreciated and that family relationship services like FRCs ensure that they establish appropriate channels of mutual communication and referral with faith leaders and services.

4.2.2 Engaging CALD communities

Research participants indicated that ‘conversations with CALD community members and agencies about their issues’ in a manner which encouraged mutual listening and dialogue was most likely to support culturally responsive practice. There was also strong endorsement of resources showcasing good practice with CALD communities, and for guidance about effective engagement. Engaging CALD communities should not overtax service providers or communities, or create unrealisable expectations (Urbis Keys Young, 2004). Good practice for mainstream services engaging with CALD communities, particularly in the challenging area of family breakdown, emphasises principles of reciprocity, equality and trust. (FCA, 2008; LSCSAs, 2006). A sub-theme in the interviews was that cultural facilitators or liaison personnel be appointed as an effective means to facilitate CALD community engagement, and that the merits and risks of creating community liaison or facilitation roles should be evaluated before committing resources (FCA, 2008).

To support these preferences, the purposes, complexities and challenges of community engagement and of appropriately supporting these families at and following separation need to be better understood, adequately resourced and properly guided. This is particularly important in light of the collaborative stakeholder relationships that the Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Client Access Strategy (VADCAS) now requires of most FSP family services, including FRCs (FaHCSIA, 2011a). It is also necessary to appreciate that ‘the process of successfully engaging communities is an outcome in its own right’, and that effective, sustained engagement is resource intensive and requires high levels of organisational commitment and capacity (Family Court of Australia [FCA], 2008, 43).
4.2.3 Optimising the participation of CALD parents

Successful CALD community engagement may not necessarily lead to community members using FDR services, but may increase CALD community capacity to navigate mainstream processes, and ultimately, make more informed choices (Armstrong, 2010a). When CALD parents do use FDR services, it is essential that they are able to derive full benefit from the service. Survey participants indicated that only a third of FDR providers have adapted parenting education programs to facilitate the participation of CALD parents. Given the centrality of these programs in encouraging parental child focus (McIntosh & Deacon-Wood, 2003), it would follow that the programs and their associated resources should be adapted culturally and linguistically to ensure that CALD participation is optimised. For example, resources could be made available in different languages; partnerships could be developed with CALD community agencies to jointly deliver the program to sufficient numbers of parents who share the same language, or to fathers and mothers separately if this is culturally appropriate; programs could be adapted to train parents who have bicultural and bilingual competency who have experienced the program, to deliver the program to parents from similar backgrounds. A real indication of commitment to accessible FDR services would be for FDR funding agencies and organisations to audit existing parenting education resources and strategies to identify the most effective ways CALD parents can participate fully in post separation parenting education programs.

Recommendations

5. FDR services should establish appropriate channels of mutual communication and referral with cultural and faith communities and their leaders and services.

6. FDR services should examine the merits and risks of creating community liaison or facilitation roles to assist engagement with CALD communities.

7. FDR funding agencies should review the purposes, complexities and challenges of community engagement and should fund FDR services appropriately for community engagement.

4.3 Encouraging conversations with colleagues about culture

4.3.1 Facilitating cultural competence training

The research findings suggest that authentic conversations are central to responsively engaging with client’s cultural contexts, and also critical to the process of professionals developing and refining cultural responsiveness. There was strong endorsement of cultural awareness training, and this has been widely recognised as necessary but insufficient in developing culturally sensitive and competent practitioners (Bean, 2006; Ralfs, 2011). Respondents also expressed reservations about existing cultural awareness training which, in their experience, had been superficial and not directly relevant to FDR practice. Cultural competence training featuring a dialogue method to facilitate understanding of cultural values and conflicts through communication and reflection, may be more consistent with preferences for conversational explorations of culture and FDR (Armstrong, 2011b; Bridging Refugee Youth & Children’s Services, 2002; Sims et al, 2008).

4.3.2 Promoting collaborative reflective professional learning

The kind of learning activities preferred by participants – structured, service-specific, collective conversations about culture – have the capacity to facilitate this kind of deeper inquiry and engagement. The research confirms existing preferences for collaborative reflective professional learning in family relationship services (Urbis Keys Young, 2004). Reflective practice is a commonly developed competency in many professional programs (Collin & Karsenti, 2011; Collins et al, 2010; McNamara & Field, 2007), including mediation (Lang & Taylor, 2000). Reflective practice is usually conceptualised as an individual process, but it is suggested by some to be more effective when it is a ‘socially situated, relational, political and collective process.’ (Reynolds, 2011, 12; Collin & Karsenti, 2011). Some refer to this as ‘reflective conversation’ (Crow & Smith, 2005; Goodfellow, 2000), and it has parallels to Wenger’s community of practice learning models (Wenger, 1999; DePalma, 2009). Collaborative reflective practice is well suited to developing dialogues about culture in FDR because of dispute resolution’s ‘longstanding commitment to engaged practice and responsiveness to people in conflict’ (Brigg, 2009, 43; LeBaron, 2003a). Critical reflection or reflexive practice may assist practitioners to more fully realise the potential of intercultural dialogue in family dispute resolution as it offers a framework for a more nuanced consideration of culture’s complexity (Armstrong, 2011a; Bagshaw, 2005; Reynolds, 2011).
4.3.3 Narrative approaches

Interviewees also identified narrative approaches as valuable for exploring culture in FDR, and for modelling the kinds of questioning, collaborative and conversational techniques which can lead to a richer understanding of client and practitioner perspectives and the way culture shapes these (Bagshaw, 2008; Bagshaw 2009). Narrative approaches to mediation and supervision are based on models and ideas that have been used extensively in therapy for many years (White & Epston, 1990; Winslade & Monk, 2000). These approaches can be adapted to collaborative and reflective professional development schemas to foster conversation, facilitate understanding and model techniques, that assist FDR professionals to be responsive to culture in their practice. (Redstone, 2009; Neal, 1996). Such processes offer the potential to normalise the consideration of culture as part of every FDR assessment, and to make every FDR ‘session … an intercultural session’, as one interviewee suggested.

4.3.4 Identifying resources to support collaborative learning

To facilitate these objectives it is desirable that collaborative reflection be deliberately structured, access resources to inform and inspire reflective practice about culture, and provide a framework for professionals to self-manage the process. The process of cultural auditing developed to guide and structure reflective practice and facilitate dialogical thinking about culture in counselling offers a very promising model that may be readily adapted to FDR (Collins et al, 2010). For example, questions relevant to Collins et al’s process of cultural auditing to reflect on the potential influences of the practitioner’s and client’s cultural contexts on establishing rapport in the professional relationship are also relevant to the initial FDR processes. They may also prompt fruitful reflection or discussion of the role of culture in FDR. Importantly, they invite practitioners to reflect on the influence of their own cultural contexts and norms. Such questions include:

- What assumptions am I making about this particular client and her or his culture?
- In what ways do I assume we are similar and different because of our cultural backgrounds?
- What aspects of my own beliefs, values, or worldview do I anticipate might be challenged or in conflict in my work with the client?
- What are my initial hypotheses about the impact of culture on the client’s presenting concerns?
- How sure am I of the accuracy of those hypotheses? How open am I to considering new information and modifying those assumptions?
- What are my initial reactions to this client, and what do these tell me about my own beliefs, values, and assumptions?
- How might gender dynamics and differences in age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or range of ability between my client and me affect the relationship?
- What conflicts in values and beliefs might arise, including religious beliefs?
- How might my prior history of working with clients from a similar cultural group affect my working with this client?
- What are the client’s cultural norms about privacy and preferences for informal versus formal relationships, degree of directiveness, and communication styles?
- What have the client’s previous experiences with people in authority been like?
- What potential language barriers exist, and how are those most effectively addressed?
This research has identified a range of issues that FDR professionals wish to better understand and capacities they wish to further develop to enhance their cultural responsiveness. The breadth and depth of materials, perspectives and strategies used in the online Avert Family Violence package, particularly those concerning diversity, demonstrate the kind of resources and the educative frameworks that might facilitate closer consideration of culture in FDR (Commonwealth Attorney General, 2011). However, as participants in this research showed least support for online learning activities, the resources in the Avert package could be used as triggers to stimulate discussion. The importance of structured and informed discussion was highlighted by research participants, and using a range of resources is important to frame and guide respectful dialogue about culture and FDR (Leake & Black, 2005; LeBaron, 2003b; Sawrikar & Katz, 2008). A case study approach illustrates how practitioners may take account of the full context of the client’s life, and not overestimate or underestimate the role of culture (Education Centre Against Violence, 2006). For example, the audio-visual case scenarios in the Education Centre Against Violence resources stimulate a practitioner to ask themselves the following questions. These may also provide the basis for collaborative discussion and a model for the exploration of culture in debriefing and supervision:

- What issues should you explore with this client?
- What values and beliefs might the client hold that are different to your own? What values and beliefs might you share?
- What questions might you need to ask this client?
- What questions might you need to ask yourself?
- Would you need to seek further information?
- What barriers exist for the client in accessing support?
- What barriers might exist for you in delivering appropriate services?
- How might you respond to and work with this client in a way that is respectful of his/her beliefs and appropriate to his/her cultural context whilst also respectful of his/her needs?
- What might you say or do?

These resources provide useful stimulus to enhance collaborative reflective learning about, and practice in relation to, culture and FDR.

**Recommendations**

8. FDR funding agencies should identify and promote examples of good practice engagement with CALD communities.

9. FDR funding agencies and FDR services should audit existing parenting education resources and strategies to identify effective ways to enhance the participation of CALD parents in post separation parenting education programs.

10. FDR funders and FDR services support the development of collaborative reflective professional learning models and resources to foster the skills and understandings needed to normalise the consideration of culture as part of every FDR process.
Conclusion
This research has identified a high level of commitment among family dispute resolution professionals to provide culturally responsive service. These professionals also indicated that they wished to be supported in this endeavour with relevant resources and FDR-specific professional development. They demonstrated a clear preference for collaborative reflection and other narrative approaches that foster conversations about culture in FDR. These collaborative and conversational approaches have the potential to be readily adapted to existing debriefing and supervision practices and to be inclusive of all FDR professionals. Further support is required for those FDR professionals who expressed less confidence working with CALD clients, particularly newly appointed FDR professionals, Legal Aid FDR professionals and administrative officers working in FDR services. Cultural competency should be adapted for and integrated into all FDR professional development frameworks and programs of study, and strategies put in place to monitor and enhance professionals’ cultural responsiveness.

The research also highlighted the need for FDR organisations to monitor and enhance their own cultural competence. Organisations have prime responsibility to facilitate the cultural competence of their staff and to ensure their processes and protocols optimise the participation of parents of CALD backgrounds. The research affirmed the importance of FDR services engaging ethically and effectively with cultural and faith communities to facilitate mutual understandings and referrals, and to support individuals to make informed service choices. This engagement needs to be better understood, and supported with adequate resources and dedicated roles, as it has the potential to be of significant value to CALD communities and to the emerging FDR profession. Funders of FDR organisations must also consider how they should appropriately resource and guide services and professionals in the delivery of culturally responsive FDR.

Only when each element of the FDR service system – systemic, organisational, professional and individual – takes responsibility for ensuring cultural competence in their service provision can we begin to effectively respond to the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged families. This research provides timely and practical guidance to support FDR organisations and professionals in this important objective.
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Encouraging Conversations About Culture: Supporting Culturally Responsive Family Dispute Resolution


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Appendix 1: Tables
Table 1: Confidence by FDR role: administrative officers less likely to agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel confident:</th>
<th>Anova</th>
<th>Levene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>identifying my own cultural influences in the FDR process</td>
<td>f = 3.88 df1 = 5 df2 = 184 p = 0.002</td>
<td>f = 6.39 df1 = 5 df2 = 184 p = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identifying cross-cultural issues between disputing parties</td>
<td>f = 5.6 df1 = 5 df2 = 188 p = 0</td>
<td>f = 9.01 df1 = 5 df2 = 188 p = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adapting FDR processes to facilitate participation by CALD clients</td>
<td>f = 8.07 df1 = 5 df2 = 183 p = 0</td>
<td>f = 14.48 df1 = 5 df2 = 183 p = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managing cultural dynamics in the FDR process</td>
<td>f = 3.12 df1 = 5 df2 = 183 p = 0.01</td>
<td>f = 6.55 df1 = 5 df2 = 183 p = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managing cultural power imbalances in the FDR process</td>
<td>f = 3.84 df1 = 5 df2 = 181 p = 0.002</td>
<td>f = 6.04 df1 = 5 df2 = 181 p = 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>helping clients consider children’s right to enjoy culture</td>
<td>f = 3.46 df1 = 5 df2 = 183 p = 0.05</td>
<td>f = 7.09 df1 = 5 df2 = 183 p = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helping clients reach culturally appropriate FDR outcomes</td>
<td>f = 4.86 df1 = 5 df2 = 182 p = 0</td>
<td>f = 8.77 df1 = 5 df2 = 182 p = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Confidence by time in role: <1 year in role less likely to agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel confident:</th>
<th>Anova</th>
<th>Levene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>assisting CALD clients in my FDR work</td>
<td>f = 2.87 df1 = 3 df2 = 190 p = 0.038</td>
<td>f = 1.77 df1 = 3 df2 = 190 p = 0.153</td>
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<tr>
<td>identifying cross-cultural issues between disputing parties</td>
<td>f = 2.75 df1 = 3 df2 = 185 p = 0.044</td>
<td>f = 6.65 df1 = 3 df2 = 185 p = 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>adapting FDR processes to facilitate participation by CALD clients</td>
<td>f = 4.85 df1 = 3 df2 = 185 p = 0.003</td>
<td>f = 7.25 df1 = 3 df2 = 185 p = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managing cultural power imbalances in the FDR process</td>
<td>f = 4.52 df1 = 3 df2 = 185 p = 0.004</td>
<td>f = 4.9 df1 = 3 df2 = 185 p = 0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responding to the dynamics of violence with CALD clients</td>
<td>f = 3.11 df1 = 3 df2 = 185 p = 0.028</td>
<td>f = 1.53 df1 = 3 df2 = 185 p = 0.206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3: Confidence by service: Legal Aid officers less likely to agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel confident:</th>
<th>Anova</th>
<th>Levene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>communicating with CALD clients</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identifying cross-cultural issues between disputing parties</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managing cultural dynamics in the FDR process</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identifying cultural influences on child development</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helping clients consider children's right to enjoy culture</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>5.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>helping clients reach culturally appropriate FDR outcomes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Cultural responsiveness of service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This service/practice:</th>
<th>Anova</th>
<th>Levene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is adequately resourced to engage with CALD communities</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has developed mutual referral processes with local CALD communities/services</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has developed mutual referral processes with local religious leaders/services</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides cultural awareness training</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has developed protocols to involve the extended family in the FDR process</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: Importance of cultural responsiveness: Administrative officers less likely to agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Anova</th>
<th>Levene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicate your agreement with the following statements:</td>
<td>f =</td>
<td>df1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to provide culturally responsive FDR</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to further develop culturally responsive FDR work</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would use professional development resources about culturally responsive</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDR practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would participate in professional development activities about culturally</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsive FDR practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6: Factors which would support culturally responsive FDR: 5 year+ in role less likely to agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Anova</th>
<th>Levene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These factors would support culturally responsive FDR practice:</td>
<td>f =</td>
<td>df1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources identifying local organisations, cultural facilitators, cultural resources</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources showcasing good practice with CALD communities</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate resources to fund engagement with CALD communities</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible professional development about culture and FDR (eg. in-house or online training</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>programs or materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External professional development about culture and FDR (eg. forums, presentations,</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workshops, training, courses)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific professional development about culture and FDR designed for this service</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apointing staff from CALD backgrounds</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing stimulus material about culture and FDR (eg dramatized scenarios, expert</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commentary, testimonials)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Research instruments
8.1 Survey

Supporting culturally responsive FDR

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. I am interested in identifying the most effective ways to support culturally responsive FDR practice.

‘Cultural and language diversity’ (CALD) refers to the cultural, ethnic, linguistic and sometimes religious diversity in the Australian community. Statistical data collection captures this diversity using a range of questions about country of birth, parents’ country of birth, language other than English spoken at home, proficiency in spoken English, ancestry, religion and year of arrival in Australia. Cultural competency or responsiveness is the capacity of an individual or organisation to provide high quality appropriate services to clients from CALD backgrounds.

The focus on CALD clients is not intended to diminish the importance of providing responsive services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or for others with diverse identities.

The following questions relate to your experience and impressions of assisting CALD clients in your FDR practice or service. You do not need to check the accuracy of these impressions before you answer the questions.

Your completion of this survey signifies your consent to participate in the research. The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete.

Please try to answer all questions that relate to your work role. Choose the most appropriate answer. Do not spend a long time on each question: your first reaction is probably the best one.
Information about you and your practice

1. **What is your current FDR role? (select all that apply)**
   - FDRP
   - Family service advisor/intake officer
   - Manager
   - Child consultant
   - Administrative officer
   - Other

2. **If other, please specify**

3. **How long have you worked in this role?**
   - Less than one year
   - 1–2 years
   - 3–4 years
   - 5 years+

4. **In what kind of FDR practice do you work? (select all that apply)**
   - Private FDR/mediation practice
   - Family Relationship Centre
   - Non-government/community based FDR/mediation practice (not FRC)
   - Legal Aid FDR/mediation practice
   - Other

5. **If other, please specify**

6. **What is the catchment of your FDR practice or organisation?**
   - City metropolitan
   - City suburban
   - Regional
   - Remote
   - State wide
   - National

7. **What kind of FDR does your organisation (or you) most often provide?**
   - Face-to-face FDR
   - Online FDR
   - Telephone FDR
   - Video Conferencing FDR
   - Other
8. If other, please specify

9. On average, how many hours a week does your work concern FDR and associated administrative activities?
   - I don’t do FDR work every week
   - 0–7 hours
   - 8–14 hours
   - 15–21 hours
   - 22–28 hours
   - 29 hours+

10. Do you also work in a professional field that is not FDR?
    - Yes
    - No

11. If you answered yes, what is this professional field?
    - Legal
    - Counselling
    - Mediation, not FDR
    - Administration
    - Other

12. If other, please specify

13. Does your FDR service advertise that it offers culturally and linguistically diverse services?
    - Yes
    - No

14. If yes, does it offer services to particular CALD communities?
    - Yes
    - No

15. If yes, to which CALD communities does it offer FDR services?
16. What proportion of clients in your catchment area is from CALD background?

- 0–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- 61–80%
- 81–100%
- Unsure

17. What proportion of clients in your FDR service/practice is from CALD background?

- 0–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- 61–80%
- 81–100%
- Unsure

18. What proportion of clients in your FDR service/practice need qualified interpreter assistance?

- 0–20%
- 21–40%
- 41–60%
- 61–80%
- 81–100%
- Unsure

19. Do the languages requested for qualified interpreter assistance reflect the language profile of the service catchment?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

20. Have you ever conducted FDR in a language other than English?

- No
- Yes

21. If yes, please specify

22. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

- No
- Yes, Aboriginal
- Yes, Torres Strait Islander
23. In which country were you born?
- Australia
- England, Ireland, Scotland or Wales
- New Zealand
- Italy
- Greece
- Vietnam
- Lebanon
- India
- China
- Other

24. If other, please specify

25. Do you speak a language other than English at home?
- No, English only
- Yes, Italian
- Yes, Greek
- Yes, Cantonese
- Yes, Arabic
- Yes, Mandarin
- Yes, Vietnamese
- Yes, other

26. If other, please specify

27. What is your ancestry? Mark only two ancestries.
- English
- Irish
- Scottish
- Italian
- German
- Greek
- Chinese
- Australian
- Vietnamese
- Indian
- Lebanese
- Other
28. If other, please specify

29. How important to you is your ancestry/ethnicity/cultural identity?
- Very important
- Quite important
- Not that important
- Not at all important
- Unsure

30. What is your religion?
- No formal religion
- Catholic
- Anglican
- Uniting church
- Presbyterian
- Buddhism
- Greek Orthodox
- Islam
- Baptist
- Lutheran
- Judaism
- Hinduism
- Other

31. If other, please specify

32. How important to you is your religion?
- Very important
- Quite important
- Not that important
- Not at all important
- Unsure

33. What is your sex?
- Male
- Female
34. What is your age group?
- 20s
- 30s
- 40s
- 50s
- 60+

35. What is your highest educational qualification?
- School Certificate or equivalent
- Higher School Certificate or equivalent
- Diploma
- University degree
- Post graduate degree or diploma

36. Please select the disciplines in which you have professional qualifications (select all that apply)
- Social Work
- Psychology
- Law
- Counselling
- Other

37. If other, please specify
Indicate your agreement with the following statements:

On this and following pages you are asked to indicate your agreement with a range of statements concerning your FDR practice/service.

**38. This service/practice...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>promotes culturally responsive service</td>
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<tr>
<td>has consulted local CALD communities about their family relationship/FDR needs</td>
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<td>has identified obstacles that might limit access to FDR by CALD families</td>
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<tr>
<td>actively engages local CALD communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>works in partnership with local CALD communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>works with CALD service providers to support CALD families</td>
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<tr>
<td>provides outreach assistance to local CALD communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>works with CALD communities to understand community based dispute resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>is adequately resourced to engage with CALD communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>has a dedicated position to promote engagement with CALD communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>has developed mutual referral processes with local CALD communities/services</td>
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<tr>
<td>has developed mutual referral processes with local religious leaders/services</td>
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<tr>
<td>monitors statistics about the use of FDR by CALD clients</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Research instruments

39. This service/practice...

- encourages professional development to foster cultural competence
- provides cultural awareness training
- adopts best practice when working with interpreters
- promotes the employment of bicultural staff
- identifies clients’ cultural background at intake/assessment
- identifies clients’ religious background at intake/assessment
- has developed protocols to respond to the needs of CALD families
- has developed protocols to involve the extended family in the FDR process
- has developed protocols to involve support personnel in the FDR process
- adapts parenting education programs to facilitate the participation of CALD parents
- adapts FDR processes to facilitate the participation of CALD clients
- considers cultural issues in its debriefing & supervision practices

40. I feel confident...

- assisting CALD clients in my FDR work
- asking about a client’s cultural background
- communicating with CALD clients
- identifying clients’ cultural communication styles
- identifying a client’s need for an interpreter
- using an interpreter with a client
- asking about a client’s religious affiliation
- assisting clients whose religious affiliation differs from my own
- identifying cultural influences in the FDR process
- identifying my own cultural influences in the FDR process
41. I feel confident…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>identifying cross-cultural issues between disputing parties</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>adapting FDR processes to facilitate participation by CALD clients</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>managing cultural dynamics in the FDR process</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>managing cultural power imbalances in the FDR process</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>identifying the presence of violence with CALD clients</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>responding to the dynamics of violence with CALD clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>identifying cultural influences on child development</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>helping CALD clients make decisions in their children’s best interests</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helping clients consider their children’s right to enjoy their culture</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>helping clients reach FDR outcomes that are culturally appropriate</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintaining impartiality when I work with CALD clients</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42. Indicate your agreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important to provide culturally competent/responsive FDR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel culturally competent/responsive in my FDR work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to further develop culturally competent/responsive FDR work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I would use professional development resources about culturally responsive FDR practice if available</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I would participate in professional development activities about culturally responsive FDR practice if available</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
43. These factors would support culturally responsive FDR practice...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>resources identifying local cultural organisations, cultural facilitators, cultural resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>resources showcasing good practice with CALD communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>adequate resources to fund engagement with CALD communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>cultural awareness training</td>
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<tr>
<td>accessible professional development about culture &amp; FDR (eg. inhouse or online training programs or materials)</td>
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<tr>
<td>external professional development about culture &amp; FDR (eg. forums, presentations, workshops, training, courses)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>specific professional development about culture &amp; FDR designed for this service/practice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>appointing FDRPs from CALD backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>appointing FDR staff from CALD backgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>more emphasis on cultural issues in FDR training</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44. If other factors would support culturally responsive FDR practice, please specify
45. These activities would support culturally responsive FDR practice...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completing online self-paced activities about culture and FDR</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individually reflecting about the influence of culture in my FDR practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participating in collaborative reflective practice/discussion with FDR</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>colleagues about culture and FDR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending seminar/workshop presentations about culture and FDR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conversations with CALD community members/agencies about their issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participating in interactive learning activities about culture and FDR (eg role plays, practical exercises)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participating in action research about culture and FDR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading stimulus material about culture and FDR (eg case studies, discussion papers, journal articles, power point summaries, opinion pieces)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Viewing stimulus material about culture and FDR (eg dramatized scenarios, expert commentary, testimonials)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

46. If other activities would support culturally responsive FDR practice, please specify
### Appendix 2: Research instruments

47. These abilities would support culturally responsive FDR practice...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>understanding the role of culture in dispute resolution</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>understanding traditional/community-based dispute resolution</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding how to engage CALD communities effectively</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developing cultural self-awareness</td>
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<td>understanding cultural norms about parenting, separation, family</td>
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<td>understanding religious norms about parenting, separation, family</td>
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<td>recognizing cultural communication styles</td>
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<td>working effectively with interpreters</td>
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<td>managing cultural dynamics in the FDR process</td>
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<td>adapting FDR processes to facilitate the participation of CALD clients</td>
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<td>assisting CALD families experiencing domestic violence</td>
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<td>supporting children’s right to enjoy their culture</td>
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<td>ensuring children’s best interests in cross cultural contexts</td>
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<td>understanding cultural influences on child development</td>
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<td>being mindful of my own cultural influences and assumptions</td>
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48. If other abilities would support culturally responsive FDR practice, please specify:

49. Finally, would you like to make any further comment about supporting culturally responsive FDR practice?
This is the final page of the survey.

This page asks if you wish to participate in a followup interview. If you wish to finalise the survey, go to the next page. Identifying information supplied on this page will not be linked to your previous answers.

50. Are you interested in participating in a half hour telephone interview to discuss some of the matters considered in this survey?

- Yes
- No

51. If yes, what is the best way for the researcher to contact you to arrange a time to conduct the telephone interview?

Name
Phone
Email

52. In what kind of FDR practice do you work?

- Private FDR/mediation practice
- Family Relationship Centre
- Non-government/community based FDR/mediation practice (not FRC)
- Legal Aid FDR/mediation practice
- Other

53. Would you like access to a copy of the report about the research?

- Yes
- No

54. If yes, please type your email address so the researcher may forward a copy of the report.
Thank you for contributing to this survey.

You can now review your answers or finalise this survey.

Review your answers if you want to check them before you finalise the survey. Click on the PREV button below to take you back to previous pages in the survey. When you are satisfied with your answers click on the DONE button below.

Finalise this questionnaire if you are satisfied with your answers and you no longer need to access this survey. Once you click on the DONE button below you will not be able to return to this survey.

If you have any questions about the survey please contact the Researcher Dr Susan Armstrong

Mobile 0438 226 130
Email sm.armstrong@uws.edu.au

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney (UWS) Human Research Ethics Committee
Phone 02 4736 0083.

The Approval number is H9173.

8.2 Interview questions
Explain project context – supporting culturally responsive FDR following Stage 1 of research.

1. Tell me about yourself – where do you work, what do you do, how long you have been practising FDR?

2. I’d like to begin by asking if you recall a moment of real learning about culture in your practice or experience?
   • Why so powerful for you?
   • What could have avoided this? Helped you do it differently?

3. Thinking about that experience, and its effect on you, what do you think would it take to achieve that kind of real learning for others in your service or practice?

4. Can you tell me what would most support you in sustaining culturally responsive service or practice?
   • What most support others in your service/practice

5. Finally, is there anything else you would like to say about supporting culturally responsive FDR?
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The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the researcher and do not necessarily reflect the views of CatholicCare or Anglicare. Whilst all reasonable care has been taken in the preparation of this publication, no liability is assumed for any errors or omissions.

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Supporting Culturally Responsive Family Dispute Resolution

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