Greek Orthodox Community of St George
GOCCare Aged and Community Care Services:
presents

Communicating with and
Understanding Greek-Speaking Older
People
Yiassou!

Please contact GOC Care on (07) 38443669 for more information or any further enquiries.
Aim of this Workshop is:

To offer practical information

- How to Interact and communicate with older Greek speaking people
- Greek Family structure
- Greek Culture: religion, food, music, etc
- Other considerations
What is Culture?
a system of values, beliefs and attitudes that shape our perception and behaviour.
“that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, law, arts, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”

Edward Taylor
Culture

- Learned or inherited?
Culture is a learned pattern of behaviour. Influenced by one’s environment. Inherited?

Culture teaches us how to think, behave, communicate, dress, cook, eat, celebrate, worship and how to spend our free time.
Why is **Culture** essential for the existence of a society?
Culture is the tool that

- Helps to establish order and discipline
- Binds people together in a society.

‘Thesmi’
CPP aims to connect

- Greek speaking seniors (and their carers) living at home or in aged care facilities, with their culture/community and with the community aged care services most suitable to their needs.
CPP aims to connect

- service providers with their CALD residents or clients and their family/carers, through cultural education and provision of resources and information.
CPP aims to **connect**

- Greek Culture ↔ non-Greek Cultures.
Which factors are responsible for creating a ‘Culture’?
Geographical location

Historical events- invasions, war, natural disasters

Governing powers-democratic, military, communist/socialist, dictatorships, etc.

Blood relations

Family dynamics

Shared interests e.g sub-cultures

A need for belonging.
The Elements of Culture

- Art
- Literature
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Music
- Values
- Food
- Religion
Universal elements-

- Marriage
- Family (based on blood relations)
- Good and bad
- Art
- Jewellery
How do we sustain our Culture?
- **Rituals** - processes repeated in specific circumstances with specific meaning.

- **Rites** - Engagement, marriage, and childbirth are events that mark a person's coming into adulthood. Girls formally become women through the vow of marriage. For men, military service is a rite of passage. All males eighteen years of age must enter the military.

- **Ceremonies** - weddings, christenings, etc.

- **Celebrations** - Saints Feast Days (Name Days), Easter, Christmas.

- **Symbols** - homes, cars, gardens, clothes.
Generally Greek People are

- Complex
- Emotional
- Spontaneous
- Open
- Welcoming
- Friendly

Beware of making assumptions
Stereotypes of Greek People are exaggerations of some common, general characteristics shared by it’s members, but they are not the whole story and we must never make assumptions or generalisations about all Greek people or over-simplify what their culture means to them.

Anglo-Australians do not all think behave, eat, dress, communicate, socialise or worship the same way, yet many may share one or some characteristics or ‘sameness’.

Euro-Australians or Asian-Australians can also share some Anglo-Australian cultural elements.
Teenage Greek-American Blogger says-
“Does "narrow-minded" mean that Greek parents are always there for their children, even if their children are middle-aged? Does that mean that Greek parents make sure their children aren't unprotected? Does that mean that they don't throw their children out of their house when they become of age? Does that mean that they provide for them until they can provide for themselves? Does it mean that they make sure that their children have everything whether it be a good education (by all means) or a home or a steady job? If so, then yes, Greek parents are narrow-minded and very proud of it, too!”
Do all Greek speaking people in Australia come from Greece?
- Greece
- Cyprus
- Egypt
- Turkey
- South Africa
- Romania
- Albania
- Syria
Migrating to Australia

- 1829 (seven Greek convict sailors) – early 1970’s (end of Australian Migration Policy)

- The first free Greek settler to South Australia arrived in Pt. Adelaide in 1842. He was a Pastoralist on the West Coast of S.A.


- Australian Gold Rushes - increased numbers.

- Greatest influx: late 1800’s - late 1940’s.

- 1860's and 1870's, many of the Greek miners married local women of Irish origin. Many never returned to Greece.

- 1890's – more permanent settlement.

- Early 1900’s - Greek community of Queensland settled in Brisbane and in the
In 1920's -1930's Greek communities-established Innisfail and Townsville-churches and Greek afternoon schools.

expulsion of Greeks from Asia Minor in 1922-23 led to further Greek migration to Australia, primarily to NSW.

Freeleagus family dominated the Greek community of Brisbane in the pre-1950 years.

early Greek communities- not well accepted by the Anglo-Australians.

attitude of Anglo-Australians changed towards Greeks during the Second World War (. German invasion of mainland Greece and Crete in April/May 1941)

Australian Migration Policy (50’s and 60’s) -Arrivals from Crete, Rhodes, etc and Cyprus.

Greek is the fourth most commonly spoken language in Australia after English, Chinese and Italian.(2006 Census)
Support services for Greek speaking people in Brisbane - West End, Taigum, Mt. Gravatt, Bundall.

Greek Origin-Average years of residency in Brisbane is 40-50 yrs.

Albanian, Romanian and Syrian- 20yrs (since late 1980’s)

Almost half of Greek-born population over 70 yrs in QLD reside in Brisbane. (859/1952)-2001 Census

65.3% of Greek Origin, spoke Greek at home. 29.1% born in Greece (2001 census-Ancestry-paper No. 03/01b)-others.

Italian-speaking (39.9%) and lower % for German-speaking.
• Greek-Ageing population of Qld, growth rate will peak between 2011 and 2021 (4 times more than Australian-born older people - Hassett & George 2002:623).

• Greek migrant population will be at its oldest between 2011-2015 and remain stable until 2024.

• Increase in the number and proportion of people over 65 years old in the next five years- 20.8% by 2031.

• By 2011 one in every five people aged 80 years+ will be from CALD backgrounds. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2001:xviii).

• 2011-2026: 1 in every 10 CALD older people will be Greek-born immigrants (higher number if based on Greek-speaking.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Greek-Birthplace</th>
<th>Number of years of age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>65-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td>998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td></td>
<td>1631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td></td>
<td>1165</td>
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Population number
Are ‘health and community care services’ culturally competent enough to cope with the increasing number of aged members in this language and cultural group?

Aged Care Recipients (2007-2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A G E</th>
<th>75-84</th>
<th>Over-seas born non-English speaking (Italy, Greece, Germany)</th>
<th>Over-seas born English speaking</th>
<th>Australian-born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>44.0</td>
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Combined Care Package use per 1000.
Higher rate of use of CACPS, EACH, EACHD among people from non-English speaking countries.

Highest users-Italian, Greek, German.

Statistics indicate that Australian migrants born in non-English speaking countries, prefer home-based aged care services rather than residential services. (older Australia at a glance 2007)

Non-English speaking, overseas-born older people, enter residential aged care at
Why??

- Cultural preferences
- Family dynamics and values
- English language proficiency
- Availability of residential care considered culturally appropriate.
Values

- The ‘village’ comes before one’s individuality
- Hospitality
- Honour
- Dignity
- Obligation and duty
Family Structure

- supportive and protective of family

- extended Family includes-aunts, uncles, grandparents, god-parents, god-children, in-laws and their extended families, close friends and neighbours.

- ‘family honour’ and ‘good reputation’.

- Guilt/Shame-traditionally, children care for elderly parents.

- Family/community- more important than the individual

- Involve family in decision making for better compliance.
- Greek speaking people prefer to stay at home.

- Greek family carer- “You guys there do such a great job. It is a great relief to families like ours that our grandmother can remain in her own home. It really is wonderful work that you do and we are very grateful”. (GOC Care newsletter 2nd Issue)

- Residential care, is generally considered, unacceptable.

- See research paper by Valerie Adams (references)

- Older people identifying with Greek Culture/Language have a collective mentality.

- Greek Community (e.g. GOC Care) endorsement of community aged care services encourages compliance.
Follow the ‘yellow brick road’ to ACAT’s

Client (Village Mentality)

Family

Church

Greek Community (GOC Care)

Doctor

GOC Care

ACAT

GOC Care

Other

ACAT

GOC Care

ACAT

ACAT

Other

ACAT
Why do some Greek-speaking people seek aged care services outside the Greek Community?
Why do some Greek-speaking people seek aged care services outside the Greek Community?

- Confidentiality- Shame or Guilt
- 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} Generation.
- Inter-cultural marriages
- Greek Identification- Language, Culture or Faith (They may choose not to be identified as ‘Greek’ for personal reasons.)
Religion

- Most Greek-speaking older people identify with Greek (Christian) Orthodox Faith.
- Church - centre of cultural activities
- Fasting periods: Easter, Christmas 1st, 15th August (dormition of the Virgin Mary)
  - no meat, dairy products or fish legumes
Religion

Greek name days
- feast day of a saint who an individual is named after.
- Birthdays are less significant.
- Expect visitors—bake sweets for offering
- Big parties, gifts and Church attendance.
- Greeting—“Hronee-a Po-la” (O as in gOt) (A as in fAst)
- Internet search—Greek Orthodox religious calendar (Saints’ Days)
Some Beliefs/Superstitions

- The Mati (má-ti) or “the evil eye” - belief that one’s misfortune is caused by the envy of another.
- Spitting-wards off evil.
- Bad luck-overturned shoes, Tuesday 13th, crows, stepping over someone, etc.
Health

- Allied Health Services are not recognised as significant as G.P services.

- Initially, all private examinations should be referred to a same-gender doctor.

- Privacy is very important.

- Avoid using the ‘C’ word (Cancer)
Music

- Folk music/songs- mirror geographic locations, peoples and particular events.

- Distinct songs for different occasions- weddings, feasts, lullabies, funerals, etc.

- Traditional Greek Music-hmv.com or any music store (international music)
Leisure and Recreation

- Food centred social gatherings.
- Men visit ‘Kafenion’ (Greek coffee shop) to drink coffee/play cards/backgammon/discuss politics, current events, sport (soccer), family.
- Women - cooking, crocheting, knitting, tapestry, cross stitching (traditionally).
- GARDENING.
- Visiting friends at home-Greek coffee and home-made biscuits (Kou-lou-ri-a), home-made preserves.
- Bus trips and any group activities.
Food

- Social Experience
- Meals - centre of table for people to serve themselves.
- Fish and lamb are popular.
- Salads - olive oil and lemon juice/vinegar dressing
- Food preparation - traditionally undertaken by the women.
Communicating with Greek-speaking Residents/Clients.

- Body language/ facial gestures and expressions/ tone of voice more important than ‘words’.
- Communication is 93% non-verbal VS 7% verbal
- Appropriate touching-hands/shoulders
- Eye contact-opposite to Asian and Indigenous cultures.
- Avoid using ‘Aussie’ colloquialisms
- Send clear messages
Communicating with Greek-speaking Residents/Clients.

- Greeting- ‘Yia-sou’ for “hello” and “good-bye”.

- May prefer the use of titles eg. Mr (Kee-ri-o) and Mrs (Kee-ri-a) plus first name, eg. Kee-ri-a Maria.

- Use ‘Thee-o’ (male) and ‘Thee-a’ (female) i.e Uncle and Aunty, if you know them well.
Pronunciation Tips

- **Eng Grk**
- **Sound**

- **h (Χχ):** pronounced as in **Hue**
- **r (Ρρ):** are rolled
- **TH: (Δδ):** pronounced as in **The**
- **th: (Θθ):** as in bath (the sound of **th**; in lower case, and is less emphasised than **TH**; is softer capital)
- **o (Ο o):** pronounced as in **gOt**
- **ou (ου):** pronounced as in **lOOk**
- **a (Αα):** pronounced as in **fAst**
- **ei (Ε ε):** pronounced as in **Eat**
- **e: (Η η):** pronounced as in **mEt**
- **i: (Ι ι):** pronounced as in **sEE**
- **y: (Γ γ):** pronounced as in **Yes**
- **κ: (Κ κ):** pronounced as in **check**
Helpful Phrases

- Ka-li-mera: Good day
- Yia-sou: Hello/ Good-bye
- Ti ka-nis- How are you?
- Ef-hari-sto- Thank-you
- Para-kalo- Please
- Ohi- No
- Ne- Yes
- Ka-li O-re-ksi - Good Appetite
- Ka-li Ho-nepsi – Good Digestion
Personal Hygiene

- well dressed and groomed.

- Personal hygiene routines to be respected and encouraged—check with family.

- General rule—same gender Carer for personal care.
Palliative Care

- Palliative Care treatment is preferred at home (spouse/children)-quality of life.
- Non-family caregivers-unfamiliar/feel abandoned.
- Shame and guilt
- First consult with nominated family member re diagnosis / prognosis of your resident/client.
- Palliative Care facility - encourage family to participate in activities, meal times, celebrate religious feasts, etc.
- ‘Cancer’, ‘Death’-taboo words.
- Euthanasia-strictly forbidden by the ‘Orthodox Faith’
- Contact resident’s parish priest for support.
Death and Dying

- Contact priest-prior to death to deliver Holy Communion.
- Rites of Body- short service by priest/oil and wine wash/shroud.
- Grief – openly expressed with much emotion.
- Cremation is not acceptable for Orthodox Christians.
- Funeral- farewell procession past home of the deceased.
- Open coffin (traditional-church, home or funeral parlour)
- Family wears black for the first year after the death.
Sources

3. GOC Care, Brisbane
5. *A HISTORY OF GREEK MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT TO AUSTRALIA* by Stavros T. Stavridis
6. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare for Dept of Health and Ageing, “Projections of Older Immigrants- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds” (1996-2026, Australia)
7. ‘Residential aged care nurses caring for dementia residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds’ Valerie Adams, Hawke Research Institute, University of South Australia (2009)
Useful Contacts

- GOC Care (including Community Partners Program) – ph. 3844 3669
- Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of St George, Brisbane – ph. 3844 3669
- Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of St Anna, Gold Coast – ph. 5574 0777