

Engage project



Project overview

Engage is a project of Primary Care Connect Shepparton (PCC), a community health service provider engaging with vulnerable and hard-to-reach community groups. PCC provides over 25 programs focusing on a range of health and wellbeing issues. It prides itself on providing person-centred and consumer-driven care that allows people to take control of their lives and bring about change.

The Engage project targets Afghan and Iraqi seniors living in the Shepparton local government area.

Forty-six seniors participated in the project.

Project description

With the assistance of a Participation for CALD Seniors Grant, PCC engaged with the growing cohort of local Afghan and Iraqi ageing refugees in Shepparton.

PCC identified that seniors from Afghan and Iraqi cultural backgrounds commonly experienced feelings of social isolation – both from their own communities, as well as the broader community.

The Engage project worked closely with the Refugee Health Team and engaged isolated seniors from Afghan and Iraqi cultural backgrounds.

The project focused on connecting seniors to a wide range of social and health and wellbeing initiatives such as lawn bowls, women's exercise classes, hydrotherapy, a textile group and the establishment of a community garden.

Project model

- The project worked with internal PCC program teams including refugee health, the physiotherapy clinic and counselling to identify isolated seniors from the target group.
- The project also worked with local providers such as the lawn bowls club, a textiles group, the art museum and the aquatic centre, as well as local service providers and community leaders, to implement the project's activities and connect seniors to the health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Taking into consideration cultural requirements, separate activities were organised for men and women participating in the project.
- Activities offered included lawn bowls for men, hydrotherapy classes for men, a women's exercise class, a women's textile group, and the establishment of a community garden with local produce.
- The project's activities were offered on a weekly basis within the local community for a couple of hours.
- An intermission during the program offered light refreshments and the opportunity for seniors to converse.

Budget

Total project cost	\$9,644
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Project challenges

Once the women's textile group showcased their work, the women wanted to try something new. The project was adjusted to enable the women to trial a women's only exercise class.

Project outcomes

- Isolated seniors were identified and engaged in local initiatives.
- Through social participation, seniors were connected to others and their local community.
- Seniors participated in social activities that promoted health and wellbeing.
- Seniors were able to meet others and converse in their primary language, socialise and stay active.
- The women's group showcased their completed textile work at a local art exhibition.
- A local community garden was established, which the seniors and community members can visit any time.

Project sustainability

Going forward, PCC will be able to continue to implement health and wellbeing activities for seniors, including lawn bowls, hydrotherapy and exercise classes and the community garden.

The continuation of the activities is made possible through the support of the local community partnerships that were created through the project, such as the local aquatic centre, bowls club and PCC.

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