



Russian

CULTURE PROFILE

An Initiative of Qld Partners
in Culturally Appropriate Care
March 2006

 **Diversicare**
Caring For People



Russian

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An Initiative of Old Partners
in Culturally Appropriate Care
June 2006

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Russian Culture Profile

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... and to all those persons who have provided
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INTRODUCTION

This profile of the Russian cultural community is one of the many projects undertaken by the Queensland Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC).

The Queensland PICAC Project aims to facilitate the development of partnerships between ethnic community groups and residential aged care service providers to implement “best practice” strategies of care for older people from diverse backgrounds. The project is about ensuring the needs of older people from a Russian cultural background are met.

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing, the project in Queensland is managed by Diversicare under the auspice of the Ethnic Communities Council of Qld.

Population trends within Australia are increasingly characterised by a diversity of people, languages and culture. Coupled with this trend is an ageing population, also with a rich diversity of languages and cultures.

It's not surprising then, that residential aged care service providers are faced with increasing demands for culturally responsive facilities and care.

This profile aims to assist by enhancing:

- staff knowledge of the cultural and linguistically diverse needs of persons from a Russian background. It also seeks to facilitate the professional competence and development of staff in the provision of culturally inclusive care; and

- The organisation's compliance with the Residential Care Standards and National Aged Care Standards as they pertain to the issue of cultural and linguistic needs.

The profile provides useful information about a range of topics, resources including books, articles, audio-video aids, services, and so on.



This symbol is used to indicate a “tip”, which YOU, as the caregiver of a person who was born within the Russian Federation, may find useful in your day-to-day support of that person.

This guide is not intended to replace one stereotype of this culture with another; instead it is intended to provide some insights into the culture. Nor does it diminish the importance of you establishing the individual cultural needs of each person as part of the care planning process.

In an effort to maintain the accuracy of this profile and improve its contents, for all stakeholders, we encourage readers to complete the feedback form on the last page to inform us of any inaccuracies or other resources available. It is considered that this feedback will assist us maintain a user relevant and quality resource.

Yours Sincerely

Margaret Hess
Director

Elizabeth Zajac
PICAC Project Officer

BACKGROUND

The Russian Federation stretching over a vast amount of Europe and Asia is the largest country in the world and has the world's eighth largest population. Russia shares land borders with Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia, and North Korea.

Formerly the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Russia is now an independent country since the Union's dissolution in December 1991.

Migration experience

Russia has links with Australia since the 18th Century when Russian navigators helped the British to chart the coast of Australia.

The Australian Census of 1901 recorded 3,358 Russia-born persons living in Australia. Following the 1905 uprising a wave of emigration of dissidents came to Australia via England and mainly settled in Melbourne or Sydney. A major part of this group were Russian Jews.

Another wave of refugees, opponents of the Bolshevik Revolution, came to Australia after 1917. These groups of emigrants were called 'White Russians' (not to be confused with the people from Belarus who are also known as 'White Russia'). Small numbers of 'White Russian' refugees continued to arrive in Australia from China right up to early 1970s.



From the 1970s mainly Russian-speaking of Jewish background arrived in Australia. Most being young professionals between the ages of 20 and 40s, coming via other countries such as Israel, Italy or Austria. Since the breakdown of the Soviet Union another wave of Russian migrants, mostly highly educated professionals and a mixture of Russian, Orthodox, Jewish and Muslim have arrived.

Australian statistics

At the 2001 Census, 15 030 Russian Federation-born persons settled in all Australian States, with Queensland being the third largest State behind Victoria and NSW. Of the total Russia-born population in Australia:

- 29.9% are aged over 65 years;
- 61.6% have either a trade or tertiary qualification;
- 61.5% were employed in a skilled occupation, 23.5% in Semi-Skilled;
- Females comprised 59.9% and males 40.1%;
- Their ancestry includes Russian (70.9%), Jewish (7.2%) and Jewish-Russian (2.2%).

(Source: Russian Community Information Summary, DIMIA, 2003)

Queensland has 8.5% (1,280 persons) of this total population and they have settled across Queensland.



The above data means the person you are caring for could have been well-educated and worked in a skilled job or a person with a limited education and not speak English at all.

Customs in everyday life

Greetings

The typical greeting is a firm, handshake while maintaining direct eye contact whilst giving the appropriate greeting for the time of day ("*Dobroe utro*" – Good morning; "*Dobriy den*" – Good afternoon or "*Dobriy vecher*" – Good evening). It is very important to remember when shaking hands with someone, to be sure to take off your gloves, as it is considered rude not to.

Russians are a very demonstrative culture, and public physical contact is common (for example, hugs, backslapping, kisses on the cheeks and other expansive gestures) among friends. Russians also tend to stand close to the other person when talking.

Referring to others

Russian names are comprised of:

- First name, which is the person's given name.
- Middle name, which is a patronymic or a version of the father's first name (formed by adding '*vich*' or '*ovich*' – for a male or '*ovna*' for a female). For example: the son of Ivan would have a patronymic of *Ivanovich* while the daughter's patronymic would be *Ivanovna*.
- Last name, which is the family or surname.

In formal situations, people use all three names, whilst friends and close acquaintances may refer to each other by their first name and patronymic. Close friends and family members call each other by their first name only.

Gestures

Putting your thumb through your index and middle fingers or making the "OK" sign is considered a very rude gesture in Russia.

If the person spits three times over his/her left shoulder it is to ward off bad luck or to express the hope for continued good fortune (similar meaning to 'knock on wood').

A gesture linked to the Russian Orthodox religion is to cross themselves with the index and middle finger of the right hand resting on the thumb. The gesture begins by touching the forehead, the chest just below the neck, then the right shoulder and, lastly, the left shoulder. This gesture is used several times throughout the day, when leaving ones home, at the end of a silent prayer, or simply at the onset of ones workday - not just in church. It's use is also most prevalent among elderly women.

Entering a room

It is courteous to open the door and let women or the host to enter the room first. It is also polite for people to remove their shoes upon entering a home, often being given a pair of slippers (tapki) to help keep the place clean.

Attire

Women usually wear a dark coloured coat, leather or wool. Men typically wear thick-soled loafers, blue jeans, sneakers or sweatshirts. Business dress is formal and conservative. Women should wear subdued business suits with skirts that cover the knees. Men should wear business suits. Shoes should be highly polished.

Everyone wears a hat, usually furry ones that are typical Russian attire, or wool or mohair berets.

Taboos

For religious reasons, 'Friday' and 'thirteen' are the most pervasive and powerful taboos in Russian culture. Russian people never hold celebrations on Fridays or on the thirteenth day in a month.

Russians never send their friends yellow gifts, because doing such implies disloyalty. They prefer gifts in blue and think of blue as a symbol of friendship.



The above customs are from a time in which the older generation lived and were raised. They may not be evident in the younger generations, nor do they necessarily apply to every Russia-born aged person. It is important YOU check on whether adherence to these, or other customs unique to their region of origin, is to be used with that Russia-born person.

Cultural stereotypes

The Russian heritage is associated with high culture in terms of theatre, drama, literature, art, concerts and opera.

Russians consider themselves a well-educated nation.

Whilst identifying as Russian, each person also has a strong sense of regional cultural identity. The region in which the person lived will impact on the person's preferences related to such things as festivals, food, drink, clothing, cultural personality, music and language dialect etc.

Russia has had a long history of totalitarianism, which has resulted in a rather fatalistic approach to living. This can also explain in part why many older Russians are generally quiet, pessimistic and don't have much faith in a better life in the future.



It should be remembered this is just one view and does not apply to every Russia-born person. This reality means YOU should establish each Russia-born person's preferences.

Having established this person's preferences be careful not to replace one cultural stereotype with another related to what should be considered stereo-typically 'Russian'.

For more information

"The Russian-born community", Community Information Summary, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA), 2006. Available as a PDF document from the following web address:

http://www.immi.gov.au/statistics/stat_info/comm_summ/summary.htm

FAMILY

Family structure

A keyword in Russian family life is 'dependence'. Russians are particularly attached to their family members because it is typical for many Russians to live in small apartments in large blocks, with 2-3 generations living together. It is normal for grown single children to live with their parents, as well as married children with spouses who will stay with one of the parents.

Russians often marry at a young age - 18-22 years. Being single in Russia is not positive. An unmarried woman has low status, regardless of occupation or income level.

The male is generally the head of the family with both parents working. Caring for children and all housework is a women's responsibility. Elderly persons are encouraged to stay with their families for as long as possible, often because the income of pensioners is very low.

Attitudes to residential care

Residential care is seen by elderly Russian people as the last option and other in-home support programs will be accessed to prolong independence for as long as possible.

Leaving home and moving into any other communal arrangement is the equivalent to losing their independence.

Where residential placement happens, this is often due to the loss of family members or family networks, rather than as a preference of the person.

(Source: www.dw-world.de/select_html/0,,,00.html)



If you need help to provide culturally appropriate care, the assistance of the PICAC Project Officer is available free of charge to your agency or the resident. This service is restricted to the greater metropolitan Brisbane and Townsville. For more information on PICAC contact Diversicare on (07) 3846 1099.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

The routines and preferences surrounding the following personal hygiene activities greatly impact on the person's sense of self, pride, dignity and confidence.

Bathing

Some Russia-born persons want a shower weekly, whereas others can prefer a shower daily. No one will accept a shower on Sundays.

Dress

Older people prefer not to wear bright colours and prefer clothes that are warm and will not wear trousers outside of the home. An older woman doesn't like to expose any parts of her body. There are cultural norms surrounding standard of dress whereby sloppy or overly casual dress in public may be seen as inappropriate. Clothing also needs to be in good repair and ironed.

What is considered 'appropriate' standard of dress is individual and will be influenced by the region in which they lived.

Grooming

Men and women take care of themselves and depending where they lived (village or town), what education level they have and where they worked, he/she may wear makeup, jewellery, nail polish or perfume etc.



It is important each person's preferences in their dress, bathing, grooming etc are established as part of their care plan.

PENSIONS

People who lived and paid taxes in other countries may be eligible for a partial pension payment from that country. To check eligibility for any payment/pension from Russia the person should contact the Russian Embassy and check what documents to send etc.

If you receive any foreign pension, Centrelink must be informed and your Australian supplement will be reduced according to the increased amount from Russia. Failure to notify Centrelink can result in a debt and fine being imposed.



Russian Embassy in Canberra

78 Canberra Avenue, Griffith
ACT 2603
Ph (02) 6295 9474
Fax (02) 6295 1847
E-mail:
rusembassy.australia@rambler.ru

Consulate-General of the Russian Federation in Sydney

7-9 Fullerton Street, Woollahra
NSW 2025
Ph (02) 9326 1188 or 9326 1866
Fax (02) 9327 5065
E-mail: ruscon@bigpond.com
Web:
www.sydneyrussianconsulate.com

For more information

Check your local telephone directory for your local Centrelink office.

LEISURE AND RECREATION

Russia is a large and extremely culturally diverse country, with dozens of ethnic groups, each with their own forms of folk music, languages and religions.

As a well-educated nation, Russians like to read and are fond of live opera, musical, ballet and drama performances.

Intellectually, Russians are interesting people to talk to and enjoy 'deep subjects' given Philosophy is a mandatory subject of all university study. This may explain why Russians like to talk about their different attitude towards material values, the 'specifics of Russian soul', and repeat the famous phrase of a Russian poet: "You can understand Russia by your mind".

Russian people are interested in sports, especially soccer, tennis, hockey, basketball and formula-one racing. They prefer to play challenging card games and chess. Older women often like to make preserves, jams, compotes, cakes or pastries.

Russians are a social culture, enjoying drinks with colleagues and friends plus sing-songs. People of all ages like talking to each other, discussing different topics.



The above information can assist in developing diversional therapy activities eg cooking cakes or pastries, craft work and/or card, chess or board games. However, YOU need to check with each individual his or her preferences in regard to the above.

Daily Routine

Russian people like a routine (eg when he/she rises or retires, bathes, when to have meals or going walking). Generally they have a structured pattern to the day and like sticking to these times.

 You need to establish with each individual his/her preferences related to his/her daily routine and timings.

Social groups

A diverse range of Russian social groups meet. The Russian clubs in Brisbane and Gladstone provide community functions, arts, music, information/education. Contact details are:

Queensland Russian Community Centre

19 Lotus Street, Buranda Q 4102
Ph (07) 3391 3432

Russian Club (Brisbane Inc)

15 Trafalgar Street
Woolloongabba Q 4102
Ph (07) 3892 2929

Russian Benevolent Assn Home for the Aged

18 Balham Street, Rocklea Q 4106
Ph (07) 3277 5841

Russian Ethnic Gladstone Group

PO Box 16, Yarwun Q 4694
Ph (07) 4973 6605

Russian-Australia Link

72 Osborne Road, Mitchelton Q 4053
Ph (07) 3354 4179

St Nicholas Cathedral-Russian Orthodox Church

114 Woodlands Drive
Rochedale South Q 4123
Ph (07) 3341 8881

Television

The SBS television network is available in major cities in Queensland. SBS provides Russian-speaking movies or serials. SBS television programming can be downloaded from their website by going to the following address:
www.sbs.com.au/whatson/index.php3
then choose what you are interested in from the listed menu.

In greater metropolitan Brisbane, Briz 31 also has programs about different cultures, download their program guide from:
<http://briz31.tv/news.html>

 Check your TV program guide or the website for local viewing time as they may change in rural areas or across time zones.

Movies

You can hire movies from video libraries – it is important you check on the back of the DVD for the list of languages in which it is available.

It is also possible to purchase Russian-language movies via the internet by doing a search, eg: <http://multilingualbooks.com/foreignvids-russian.html>

You can also search the Brisbane City Council library catalogue via its language collection by going to the following website and choosing the preferred language which will then take you to a screen where you choose your category of interest (eg movies, books, music, DVDs): www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/uhtbin/cgisirsi/

Radio

Broadcasting in Russian language occurs on SBS on Friday 5pm – 6pm.

SBS radio programming (SBS radio 2 97.7 or SBS Radio 1 1107) can be downloaded from their website by going to the following address: www.sbs.com.au/radio/ then choose “radio schedule” on the left side of the screen.

In greater metropolitan Brisbane, it is also possible to tune into 4EB (Fm 98.1) and their program guide can be downloaded from their website at the following address: <http://www.4eb.org.au/progguide.htm>

The Russian international broadcaster can also be listened through ‘Deutsche Welle’ over the web by logging onto the following website and choosing preferred language: www.dw-world.de/

 Check your radio program guide or the website for local listening times as they may change in rural areas or across time zones.

Newspapers

The region in which the person lived in Russia can affect his/her preferred newspaper. There are 3 ways to access Russian-language newspapers:

1) Go to the following web address <http://www.pressdisplay.com/pressdisplay/viewer.aspx>

and access a copy of the following newspapers:

- Газета (Argumenty i Fauty)
- Moskovsky Komsomolets
- Московская Правда (Kommersant)
- The Moscow Times
- Комсомолка Правда (Komsomolskaya Pravda)
- Izvestija
- The Moscow News
- Komsomolskaya Pravda
- Moscovskie Novosti
- Trud

2) The following web address gives you access to ALL newspapers produced nationally or in the towns listed eg. choosing Moscow leads to a listing of 5 newspapers from which to choose to download:

<http://www.mediatico.com/en/newspapers/europe/russia>

3) You can search on the web using the name of the publication. For example ‘Izvestija’ and you can get the free access to this paper:

<http://www.russia.com/newspapers/>

 If the person can't use a computer, don't forget you can access the internet and load these newspapers and print all or some pages which can then be given to the person to read at their leisure.

Books

Regardless of your location in Queensland it is possible to arrange to have any Russian-language books sent to your local library for a small fee.

You can search the Brisbane City Council library catalogue via its language collection by going to the following website and choosing the preferred language which will then take you to a screen where you choose your category of interest (eg movies, books, music, DVDs):

www.ourbrisbane.com/whatson/books

Or: www.brisbane.qld.gov.au



Every council library in Queensland borrows from the Qld State Library. The State Library itself has Russian-language resources (books, videos, CDs) that your local library can arrange to borrow for a small fee. You can do a search of the State Library resources (which will list the resource, type of resource and call number) by going to the following web address:

<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/find/cat>

Talking books in Russian-language can be difficult to obtain from libraries. However, there are some in Pine Lodge in Brisbane which you can negotiate access to by contacting the Manager - (07) 3277 5841.

ONLY for those persons who are visually impaired and a member of the Qld Blind Foundation, it is possible to borrow from its talking book library which has *only 2* Russian-language taped books. You will need to complete an application form, and if approved, borrowing rights then apply. Contact 1300 654 656 to obtain a referral form.

Music

Music is very important to Russia-born person regardless of gender. It is a strong cultural expression of who that person is and the region he/she lived in.

The key thing to remember with music is a likely personal preference for music of the era in which they were teenagers or in their twenties. It is likely that older persons will prefer traditional Russian music.

You can purchase from the larger music stores on their websites eg Sanity's web address allows you to search for Russian-language music and CDs. Their web address is: <http://www.sanity.com.au>

You can search the Brisbane City Council library catalogue via its language collection by going to the following website and choosing the preferred language which will then take you to a screen where you choose your category of internet (eg movies, books, music, DVDs):

www.brisbane.qld.gov.uthbin

Please note, a fee may apply for organising inter-library loans.



Again establish each individual's preferences and check whether family members can assist in finding Russian language books, videos, DVDs, music etc.

For more information

Refer to Diversicare's Multicultural Resource Directory (2004) for more detailed information about sources and other options.

RELIGION

Profile

The majority of Russian people belong to a church, even if they may in practice not be regular attendees. Of the total Russia-born population in Australia the major religions are:

- Russian Orthodox (27.2%)
- Jewish (19.5%)
- Western Catholic (5.6%)
- 19.3% stated 'No religion'

(The Russian Community Information Summary, DIMIA 2003.)

Remember there can be a difference between nominating a particular religion to practicing that religion in ones' everyday life (or whether all or some rituals/practices within that religion are observed).

Equally, just because a person when young did not practice or observe their religion doesn't mean as the person ages he/she might now wish to practice.

 YOU need to establish each person's religious preferences and link him/her into a local minister of that religion. For more information related to religion in Russia visit:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion-in_Russia

Other days celebrated by Russian people are:

- March or April - Pancake week (before Easter's Lent)
- May 1st – Labour Day
- May 2nd – Spring Day Holiday
- May 9th – Victory Day
- June 12th – National Day
- August 22nd – Day of the Russian Federation State Flag
- November 7th – Accord and Reconciliation Day
- December 12th – Constitution Day

 The following listing is not intended to be exhaustive; rather it lists the major shared 'special days'. You should check with the person or his/her family if there are other special days, which is important to that person.

Important Days

There are a variety of special events at State, city and local level.

Festivity	Month / Date	Customary practices
Easter	<p>Easter is celebrated on different days every year – check which days Orthodox Church will celebrate Easter.</p> <p>The last Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday.</p> <p>Easter celebration</p> <p>Good Friday (Velikaya Piatniza)</p> <p>Easter Sunday</p> <p>Red Hill – the first Sunday after Easter. (<i>Krasnaja Gorka</i>)</p>	<p>Lent (<i>Fasting</i>) - 40 days before Easter. Fasting and preparation for Easter.</p> <p>The last week of the Fast is called Holy Week. Willow branches (<i>Verba</i>) are put by icons until the next <i>Willow Sunday</i>.</p> <p>People cook a wide variety of Easter cakes (Kulich, Pasha), painting eggs. Samples of the food prepared are taken to the church to be blessed. Russian Easter eggs are of two different types: 'krashenki' – brown colour achieved by boiling the eggs with onion skins; and 'pysanki' which are painted. People give Easter eggs with good wishes. (Popular play/game: <i>cracking the Easter eggs. One persons' egg is hit by eggs of another person. Person whose egg is not broken is the winner.</i>)</p> <p>Deep mourning and fasting.</p> <p>This day is considered the best for wedding ceremonies. People living in the country celebrate the first green leaves on the trees by dancing and singing songs. Krestny Khod – people attending mass sharing joy with each other.</p> <p>Also popular for wedding ceremonies.</p>
Name Day "Dien Angela"	Every day is connected with different saints.	<p>People who share the same name receive special gifts, flowers and good wishes from family members and friends.</p> <p>Birthdays are <i>not</i> popular to celebrate.</p>

Festivity	Month / Date	Customary practices
Advent	Commences 4 Sundays before Christmas	Preparation for Christmas. Some people fast and go to church.
Christmas	Christmas Eve – Russian Orthodox 6th January <i>(Some people also celebrate 31st December)</i>	Christmas Eve supper is meatless but festive. A special porridge called kutya is served. It is made of wheat berries or other grains and honey and poppy seeds. A ceremony involving blessing the home is also frequently observed. Before supper people attend church for a special mass. After Christmas Eve services people carry candles or torches and parade around the church. After the church service people are involved in house-to-house carolling - a ritual known as <i>kolyadki</i> .
Christmas Day	Christmas Day – 7th January	Families spend the day together, some attending the church and have special dinner. Everyone can eat anything and everything. Santa Claus (Ded Moroz) leaves gifts under the Christmas tree.
New Year's Eve	31st December	New Year's balls, fireworks, people kiss, hug and wish Happy New Year to relatives and friends. After that everyone exchanges gifts.
New Year	Russian Orthodox – 13th January 1st January	Some people celebrate the New Year on 1st of January. New Year remains the most important holiday for most Russians.

FOOD AND DIET

The essential components of Russian cuisine are those foods that provide the most carbohydrates and fat rather than proteins eg. bread, potatoes, meat, eggs and butter. Fresh fruits and vegetables are rarely used in meals.

Meals

Breakfast Usually this is a quick meal. Adults are likely to have an open sandwich with cheese, ham or salami with a cup of tea. Children tend to eat a cooked meal consisting of a boiled egg, omelette or kasha (any cooked grain or cereal served with milk, sugar and butter).

Lunch This is the main meal of the day and is eaten between 1pm and 3pm. Lunch starts with a small entrée (*zakooska*) eg. salted-herring or salad etc. This is followed by soup often made from a homemade

stock. After soup is the main course eg. fish or meatballs. If a meat stew is eaten they tend to have been flavoured using wild mushroom, pickled cucumber or special cream. The main course is served with potatoes, pasta, cereal, salted-cucumbers and always served with bread.

Lunch is finished with either coffee, tea, *compot* (stewed fruit) or fruit juice.

Afternoon tea Desserts or pastries are very popular and particularly enjoyed at this time. Tea or milk follows.

Dinner (or supper) This meal is eaten with the family around the table. Soup can be served again and the main course might be vegetables like potato cakes with mushroom sauce or cottage cheese.

Bread	Cheeses	Vegetables	Meat / Fish	Fruit	Drinks
dark, heavy rye bread, toast	cottage cheese and any other kind of yellow cheeses are popular	beetroot, cabbage, peas, beans, potatoes, cucumbers, tomatoes, onion and garlic Honey is very popular	chicken, fresh water fish, meatball, steak, frankfurter-type sausages and beef, pork meat	fresh fruits not very popular – maybe only apples and berries stewed or cooked fruits (compots) are popular	tea, coffee, tea with lemon beer, wine, vodka



It is important to establish each person's food preferences, cooking style (eg fried versus poached), quantity and timing of meals and recorded as part of their care plan.

Food sources

More and more of the larger food stores eg Woolworths, Coles stock Russian (or European) foods, and you should check what is available at these types of stores in the first instance.

Below is the list of known suppliers of food in South-East Qld. often used by Russian people. In the marked places (*) you can also buy, jams, breads, soups, macaronies sweets etc.

German Butcher Heinz

611 Stanley Street
Woolloongabba Qld 4102
Ph (07) 3391 3530

Rene's Smallgoods

41 Tubbs Street
Clontarf Qld 4019
Ph (07) 3283 7711

***Adam's Continental Smallgoods**

206 Cobalt Street
Carole Park Qld 4300
Ph (07) 3271 3044

***Swiss Gourmet Deli**

181 Boundary Street
West End Qld 4101
Ph (07) 3844 2937

Euro Continental Food

Quality Greek & European Products
Shop 1/75-77 Russell St
West End Qld 4101
Ph (07) 3844 5059

Franz Continental Smallgoods

15 Industrial Avenue
Caloundra Qld 4551
Ph (07) 5493 9366

HEALTH

Trauma situations

World War II is a subject that needs to be handled with tact. It should not be forgotten that Russia-born aged persons have lived through a very traumatic time arising from not just the war experience but also the years post-war when times were very tough. It is likely that many families were split up and dislocated to areas thought safer than large towns.

Perception of health professionals

Russian people believe in the unlimited power of drugs and other forms of therapy. The high status of the patient influences not only the patient-family relationship, but also the patient/doctor relationship and hospital care.

The patient expects therefore to be listened to, not only when he/she discloses the symptoms, but also when he/she states own ideas about the nature of his/her complaints, its origins and treatments. Russian persons want to know all about their disease/illness, what caused it, how long it is going to last, what is to be the outcome – and they also expect all this information will be provided in way they are able to understand. They often see food and stress as frequent causes of any illness.

Complementary medicine is also seen to have an integral role in the health of Russia-born persons, often alongside western medicine. It is not uncommon for the person to seek medical advice and medication and then go seek help from a health practitioner eg. Herbalist, naturopaths, homeopath or acupuncture and undertake a remedial exercise program.

It should be noted that whilst respectful of their professional status, the person will question the doctor freely eg asking about drug side effects, the implication of the illness on their particular lifestyle etc.



This may mean YOU shouldn't perceive a Russian person who questions a doctor or health professional as being difficult. Nor should you consider the person as 'being difficult' should he/she want a second opinion or to access complementary medicines of some type.

Attitudes to illness and pain

Russian persons are often stoic about pain and loath seeing a doctor too quickly - trying to cope with it for as long as possible mostly by ignoring it. The person generally won't talk about it unless a close friend or family member mentions any changes they have noticed.

Generally Russians have a strong tendency for self-diagnosis, using medical books and natural treatments (herbs etc.).

Going to health professionals is usual and Russia-born persons are used to the medical hierarchy (i.e. General practitioners for overall health with referral to Specialist as needed for more in-depth treatment). Russia's health care system is characterised by large outpatient facilities called "polyclinics", where general physicians (called a therapist) and various specialists are employed. These persons are viewed as professionals and are treated respectfully by the patient.

Preventive medicine and wellness programs were virtually nonexistent in Russia, as are programs to educate the public about personal sanitation, proper diet, and vitamins etc. The average Russian person doesn't consume a balanced diet. Vegetables often were scarce in Russia, except in rural areas, where home-grown, and fruit has never constituted an important element of the Russian diet.

The concept of self-help (eg exercises, rehabilitation programs) is also strong in the Russian psyche.

DEATH AND DYING

Palliative Care

The concept of a hospice and palliative care was not known in Russia. Care of the terminally ill has been a family responsibility, and in some cases there can be some opposition to the perceived 'intrusion' by outsiders.

It is likely that Russia-born elderly persons will be unaware that such services exist or what it entails. If the person does know something about palliative care he/she has learnt this whilst resident in Australia.

Death

The deceased is bathed and dressed in the clothes he/she has usually chosen before death and these instructions were given to a family member.

Cremation is rare, according to the individual's religious beliefs. An Orthodox priest will conduct the burial. In general relatives wear black clothing on the day of the burial, with the spouse choosing to wear black for up to 1 year (the year of burial).

 It is important to establish each person's wishes in the event of palliative care or death and recorded as part of their care plan.

LANGUAGE

Russian language is related to Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, as well as the modern Germanic, Romance, and Celtic languages, including English, French, and Irish. It has a Cyrillic alphabet.

The main languages spoken at home by Russian Federation-born people in Australia are Russian 76.2%, and Polish 2.4% - with 13.2% of this population also speaking English very well or well. (Source: Russian Community Information Summary, DIMIA, 2003.)

Many elderly Russia-born persons will have developed a mix of Russian and English languages, using both often in the same sentence.



YOU need to be aware that just because they once could speak English, this does not mean a) they necessarily spoke it fluently or extensively OR b) they have retained these skills as he/she aged OR c) that it is their preferred language as speaking English can be tiring to the elderly – as they are engaging in a translation-type of process.

For more information

A variety of language guides targeted at health and everyday activities is available at a cost from:

HENDRIKA (HEalth aND Rapport Interactive Kommunikation Aid)

PO Box 326, Beaudesert, Qld 4285 or via website address: www.hendrika.com.au

Following is a sample of communication aids available through the web.

Russian Language - Basic information:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_language

To learn basic phrases and words:

<http://www.waytorussia.net/WhatIsRussia/Russian/Part2.html>

or:

<http://www.guidetorussia.org/culture/russian-language.shtml>

Some examples of simple phrases/words in Russian:

English	Russian	Pronunciation
What is the time? It's two o'clock This morning Tonight How Long?	Который час ? Два часа Сегодня утром Вечером Как долго	Kato'ryi chas? Dva chasa Segod'nya ootrom Vye'cherom Kak dol'go
Here House Yes No Thank you	Сюда Дом Да Нет Спасибо	Syuda' dom da nyet Spasi'bo
Please Good-bye Good Medicines Ointment	Пожалуйста До свидания Хорошо Лекарства Мазь	Pazhal'sta dasvidanya Kharasho' Lekar'stva maz
Fracture Good day Good evening Do you understand I don't understand	Перелом Добрый день Добрый вечер Вы понимаете? Я не понимаю	pyerelom Dobreey den Dobreey vecher Vy poni'maete Ya ne poni'mayu
Excuse me Where Here Left/right Straight ahead Behind When Never	извините где Здесь Лево/право Прямо Позади Когда Никогда	Izvi'nite gde zdes 'levo/pravo P'ryamo Poza'di Kog'da Nikogda

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Diversicare Resources

- Cultural Diversity Resource Directory for Residential and Community Care Agencies, 2005. Lists all known resources under chapter headings of – Communication, Cultural background, Health and Personal Care, Lifestyle, Legal, Management, Resources.

Phone Director, Diversicare for this resource on (07) 3846 1099.

Useful Websites

Western Australia

www.health.wa.gov.au/mau/

New South Wales

www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au/health-public-affairs/mhcs/resources/index.html#top

Victoria

www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcht.nsf/CategoryDoc/PresentCategory?Open

Federal Government

www.ageing.health.gov.au/publicat/multilin.htm

www.ageing.health.gov.au/publicat/pubindex.htm

Cross Cultural Health Program (USA)

www.xculture.org/resource/order/index.cfm?Category=Articles

Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health - Video Catalogue

http://www.ceh.org.au/video_catalogue.htm

Alzheimers Australia

www.alzheimers.org.au/content.cfm?categoryid=14

Alzheimer's Australia NSW

www.alzheimers.org.au

Queensland Health – Multicultural Health Publications

www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/restopicmaster.asp?Rec=40&frmHealthTopic=MulticulturalHealth

Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre

www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/qtmhcmultilingual_resources.asp

Cancer Foundation

<http://www.cancerindex.org/clinks13.htm>

Nutrition Australia

www.nutritionaustralia.org

Information Lines

Aged and Community Care

Information Line: 1800 500 853

Carelink: 1800 052 222

Libraries

Organisations must be registered to borrow

Diversicare

Ph (07) 3846 1099

Blue Care

Ph (07) 3377 3327

Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre

Ph (07) 3240 2833

HACC Resource Unit

Ph (07) 3350 8653

Alzheimers Association of Queensland Inc.

Ph (07) 3857 4043

CORRECTION / ADDITION FORM

Please complete the following page if you are aware of either incorrect details or you know of additional resources that should be included.

Correction

Listed item	Correction
Title:	
Page:	

Additional Resources / contact

Contact details	Description of resource
Title:	(include whether Person contact, book, tool, video, article, course)
Publisher:	
Address:	
Phone:	
Website:	

Send this form:

Post
Diversicare
PO Box 5199
West End Qld 4101

Fax
Attention: Margaret Hess
Diversicare
Fax: (07) 3846 1107

Thank you for your assistance in keeping this document current.

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