

Canberra Refugee Support
Good Practice Guide[®]

Purpose. This Good Practice Guide is intended to provide a point of reference and checklist for members of Canberra Refugee Support in their dealings with Asylum Seekers and Refugees. It forms part of the training regime and is complemented by Induction Training, Periodic Update Briefings, Team Interaction and Supervision.

Version. It is intended to issue revised versions of this Guide and each new version will be numbered accordingly.

Item	Topic	Guidance
1.	Role of Canberra Refugee Support	The role of Canberra Refugee Support is to provide support to refugees including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. assisting refugees to settle in Canberra; b. providing advocacy; and c. providing policy advice.
2.	Role of Members	Our role is to provide support to refugees. We do not provide "advice" on legal or migration issues nor do we offer Migration Agent services.
3.	Aim	Our aim is to help settle refugees in Canberra and assist them to become independent members of the community as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, we offer ongoing contact and support whenever required. This support might be taken up years after initial contact.
4.	Use of Interpreters	When using an interpreter we ask that the actual words we used be interpreted and that the words used by the client be interpreted. We also ask that questions put by or to the client are interpreted and not answered by the interpreter.
5.	Financial Commitments	We don't make financial commitments without the prior agreement of the Treasurer.
6.	Client Confidentiality	The personal details and information related to the families and individuals we support is confidential. It is not passed on to other persons or agencies without informed consent or reasonable cause and should be safeguarded so that it is not passed to others inadvertently.
7.	Canberra Refugee Support Inc Privacy Policy	The personal details of our membership is confidential. It is not normally available to others without the approval of the person concerned (except as required by the Associations Incorporation Act 1991 or other legislation). Similarly, the content of information related to our activities is normally not intended for distribution to others.
8.	Trauma and Torture	Many of the people we support are the victims of torture and trauma. We encourage awareness of the issues related to this and offer access to professional support. Where there is reluctance on the part of our client to access professional support we must respect their decision.
9.	Respect for the Wishes of the People we Support	Our role is to support refugees. We always respect the wishes of those we support. We need to suggest alternatives but then support the choice taken by the person concerned.
10.	Cultural Sensitivity	We always respect and acknowledge the cultural preferences of the people we support. In addition, we inform them of the standards, laws and common practices that apply in Australia. We never

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		endorse illegal activity even if it is common practice in the home culture of our supported families. We need to make sure that our clients are briefed by us on Australian expectations and customs especially concerning the privacy of information, care of children, the use of physical violence and schooling obligations.
11.	Client Decision Making	The ideal that we aim for is that we provide information and our clients make decisions. We might then assist with implementation. When greater levels of intervention are required by us, we should always seek to redress the decision-making balance back towards the client as soon as possible.
12.	Exploitation	We never exploit or take advantage of the people we support. It is also important that we avoid placing ourselves or our group in a position where it might appear that we are taking advantage of our clients.
13.	Reporting	It is important that support teams and members are kept informed on issues and the general progress of those we support. All of the members of the group are encouraged to use email to keep everyone informed.
14.	Independence and Dependence	When we assist with the settlement of clients we need to strive for a balance towards “independence” rather than “dependence”. A common example is that we should show a client how to use the local bus system rather than habitually offer to provide transport to appointments. Our success can be measured in part, by the degree of independence the client achieves.
15.	Mentoring	We value the wellbeing of our members and need to look after one another. We all have a responsibility to look for the signs of exhaustion and over commitment in ourselves and in others. We need to mentor one another.
16.	Committee Meetings	Committee meetings are open to all members. Participation is encouraged and members are welcome to sit in occasionally or attend regularly. Members are also encouraged to participate in discussion.