

Moving Towards Cultural Proficiency

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Area of Proficiency	Culturally Unaware	Culturally Resistant	Culturally Accepting	Culturally Insightful	Culturally Proficient
Knowledge of Clients & Staff	Doesn't notice differences or has no exposure to other groups	Stereotypes, positive or negative of other groups	Respects but has little or no understanding of other cultures.	Acknowledges strengths and legitimacy of other cultures.	Pursues knowledge & understanding of other cultures. Comprehends their point of view.
Attitude towards Diversity	Not interested	Views as inferior or problematic or uncomfortable	Less judgmental but perplexing Open to new information	Enjoys learning about others	Values and leverages diversity
Behaviors	Unintentionally insensitive, offensive or paternalistic. Believes one approach fits all clients/staff	Blind to own biases & tends to blame client/staff Has lower expectations for behavior & compliance	Examines assumptions re: client /staff behaviors & recognizes own biases & limits	Shifts to other's cultural frame of reference, can uncover culture based obstacles to problems/needs	Flexibly adapts to different cultural situations, can negotiate culture based conflicts & adapt approaches based on new info

CULTURAL COMPETENCY IS NOT...

- er* About sensitivity and awareness but skills and taking action
- er* A recipe that tells you what to do with certain groups of people, but tools and skills that will help YOU decide what to do
- er* Being politically correct but taking the initiative to acquire the information you need as well being willing to learn from mistakes
- er* Using information to create new stereotypes but building relationships with individuals and learning how they fit in their identified cultural contexts
- er* Affirmative Action and hiring people who look like the clients but ensuring all staff are able to work effectively with clients from a variety of different cultural groups
- er* A separate, isolated program or quick fix, but an ongoing, evolving integrated approach to service provision that permeates all levels and functions of the organization

Definitions

Culture

A system of shared values, beliefs, meanings, norms and traditions that define a group and influences behavior

Cultural Awareness

Awareness of how one's attitudes, values, beliefs and biases affect one's perception of self and others.

Cultural Sensitivity

An awareness that one's perceptions and reality are valid for self but not necessarily universal and shared by others. Recognition and respect for customs and cultural norms different from one's own

Cultural Competence

A set of attitudes, skills, behaviors and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enables effective work with people from different cultures.

Acculturation

The degree to which an individual identifies and adapts to a new or different culture

Assimilation

Making oneself similar to a new or different culture in order to adapt or fit in, often discarding one's original culture in the process.

Culturally Competent Program Administration

Knowledge of:

- II Client and community demographics and cultural beliefs and systems
- II Staff demographics & cultural competency training and development needs and abilities
- II Existing policies, procedures and systems that support or inhibit agency wide cultural competency development and responsiveness
- II Potential and existing culture based barriers to service access
- II Cultural resources, allies and networks

Attitude

- II Values diversity
- II Believes cultural competence is essential
- II Views cultural competence as an ongoing, evolving process of continuous learning and improvement
- II Believes cultural competence needs to be integrated at all levels and across all functions of the organization
- II Believes the organization is responsible for promoting, developing and supporting cultural competency
- II Zero tolerance for discrimination and intolerance in the workplace

Behaviors

- II Demonstrates a system wide commitment via written policies, procedures, program goals and job descriptions that promote and support cultural competence
- II Provides training and other developmental opportunities (case conferences, supervision, information, etc.) to ensure **ALL** staff, not just a designated resource person, are capable of working effectively with clients from different cultures
- II Provides mechanisms for sharing new cultural information
- II Recruits and retains staff from communities served and leverages their different perspectives, skills and experiences
- II Holds staff accountable by integrating cultural learning and competency expectations into performance evaluations, case conferences, supervision and staff meetings
- II Empowers community advisory boards to function effectively as a collaborative partner in program development and quality assurance
- II Enhances access to services by removing cultural & linguistic barriers
- II Institutionalizes cultural competency programs, initiatives and information
- II Provides a safe forum for honest dialogue with and among agency personnel and community members to discuss cultural issues
- II Provides prompt and equitable resolution of complaints or grievances related to provision of culturally competent services
- II Provides appropriately translated written materials and signage

Personal Responsibility and Accountability

Behaviors

- II Do an honest self-assessment. What do I need to learn to keep on becoming culturally competent? What biases might get in my way? How can I get the information and assistance I need?
- II Assess clients from their cultural framework as well as your own.
- II Assess areas and degrees of acculturation and its impact on clients.
- II Acknowledge and discuss differences and similarities and find common ground. You may share the same values with your clients but express them very differently.
- II Check out your assumptions with your clients. Explore and respect culture based reasons for behaviors without judging the individual. Ask yourself, "Does this mean what I think it means?"
- II Explore discrepancies between accepted cultural practices and the behaviors you observe.

Adapted from Sally Jew's compilation of Cultural Competency research
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Miguel Valenciano
Mvalenciano2@aol.com