



# CULTURAL COMPETENCE

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## WHAT'S CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

**CULTURE** refers to integrated patterns of human behavior that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups

**COMPETENCE** implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by consumers and their communities



## BRINGING IT TOGETHER

- **Cultural competence** is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations
- Cultural competence is a developmental process that evolves over an extended period. Both individuals and organizations are at various levels of awareness, knowledge, and skills along the cultural competence continuum
- Cultural competence is the **integration and transformation of knowledge** about individuals and groups of people **into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes** used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services; thereby producing **better outcomes**



# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE vs. AWARENESS vs. SENSITIVITY

- Cultural competence emphasizes the idea of **effectively operating** in different cultural contexts, and altering practices to reach different cultural groups
- Cultural knowledge, sensitivity, and awareness do not include this concept
  - Although they imply understanding of cultural similarities and differences, they do not include action or structural change



## WHAT ARE THE KEY COMPONENTS?

**Attitude:** The significance of attitude in cultural competence is to delineate the difference between just being aware of cultural differences and actively analyzing your own internal belief systems and developing awareness.

**Knowledge:** Research into human behavior has shown that our values and beliefs about equality may not line up with our actual behaviors and further we often are ignorant as to the degree of difference between our beliefs and our actions. It has been shown that people who may test well in regards to having low prejudices may in fact act with great prejudice when actually interacting with other cultures. Understanding this disconnect is why knowledge is considered a key aspect of developing one's own cultural competence.



## WHAT ARE THE KEY COMPONENTS?

**Awareness:** Being aware of your own individual biases and reactions to people who are of a culture or background significantly different from your own. By being aware of your own internal biases you can begin to work towards other aspects of Cultural Competency.

**Skills:** This component is about actually taking practices of cultural competency and repeating them until they become integrate into one's daily behaviors. The most important aspect of the skills component is having an excellent grasp on effective and respectful communication whether within an organization or between individuals. An often overlooked aspect of communication is body language and the sometimes extreme variation in the meaning of gestures between one culture and another.



# PRINCIPLES OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- Define culture broadly
- Value clients' cultural beliefs
- Recognize complexity in language interpretation
- Facilitate learning between providers and communities
- Involve the community in defining and addressing service needs
- Collaborate with other agencies
- Professionalize staff hiring and training
- Institutionalize cultural competence



# IN THE WORKPLACE

- Cultural competence requires that organizations:
  - have a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally
  - have the capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics of difference, (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and (5) adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve
  - incorporate the above in all aspects of policy making, administration, practice, service delivery, and involve systematically consumers, key stakeholders, and communities





# HOW DO WE GET THEM TO THE TABLE?

- Research who is out there!
- Outreach
- Face to face preferably
- Go to new events & learn about cultures to then coordinate for future events



## WHY IS IT NECESSARY & BENEFICIAL?

- Representative of community
- Initiatives relevant to population
- Sustainability
- Effective



thank

you 

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