

Cultural Competence Primer - Summary

Incorporating Cultural Competence into Your Comprehensive Plan

What is cultural competence?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines cultural competence as a “set of behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or program or among individuals, enabling them to function effectively in diverse cultural interactions and similarities within, among and between groups.” When coalitions incorporate cultural competence into their work, they:

- Invest time and resources in training staff and volunteers in cultural competence.
- Carefully examine their structure, practices and policies to ensure that these elements truly facilitate effective cultural interactions.
- Display respect for differences among cultural groups.

Understanding culture is a process:

1. **Cultural Knowledge**—Knowledge of some cultural characteristics, history, values, beliefs and behaviors of a different group.
2. **Cultural Awareness**—Openness to the idea of changing cultural attitudes.
3. **Cultural Sensitivity**—Knowledge of cultural differences without assigning values to the differences.
4. **Cultural Competence**—Ability to bring together different behaviors, attitudes and policies and work effectively in cross-cultural settings to produce better results.

Overarching principles of cultural competence

Individuals who work in various areas of substance abuse prevention served on the SAMHSA Center for Substance Abuse Prevention’s Racial and Ethnic Specific Knowledge Exchange and Dissemination Project committee, which drafted the following overarching principles that define cultural competence:

- Ensure community involvement at all levels.
- Use population-based definitions of community (let the community define itself).
- Stress the importance of relevant culturally appropriate approaches.
- Support the development of culturally specific services.
- Adhere to Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.
- Use culturally relevant outcomes and indicators.
- Employ culturally competent evaluators.
- Engage in asset mapping—identify resources and start from this point.
- Promote organizational cultural competence—staff should reflect the community it serves.
- Allow the use of indigenous knowledge in the body of “evidence-based” research.
- Include target population(s) (e.g., youth, consumers, participants, elders).

Source: CADCA Cultural Competence Primer

http://www.coalitioninstitute.org/SPF_Elements/CulturalCompetence/CulturalCompetenceHome.asp

Cultural Competence Checklist

Use the following checklist to ensure that important issues are addressed, adding new items as needed.

Issue	Is the issue adequately addressed? Yes/No	How do you / will you address this issue?
Are coalition members and staff representative of the target population?		
Are the published materials and curricula relevant to the target population?		
Have the curricula and materials been examined by experts or target population members?		
Has the coalition taken into account the target population's language, cultural context, and socioeconomic status in designing its materials and plans?		
Has the program developed a culturally appropriate outreach action plan?		
Are activities and decision-making designed to be inclusive?		
Are meetings and activities scheduled to be convenient and accessible to the target population?		
Are the gains and rewards for participation in your program clearly stated?		
Have coalition members and staff been trained to be culturally sensitive in their interactions with the target population?		

Adapted from: Getting to Outcomes, Volume 1. SAMHSA, CSAP, NCAP, June 2000.

Building Cultural Competence into the SPF.

SPF Element	Actions to Build Cultural Competence
Assessment	
Capacity	
Planning	
Implementation	
Evaluation	

Pulling It Together (Part 4)

Using the Cultural Competence Checklist

Part 1:

1. By yourself – complete the Cultural Competence Checklist for your coalition. Identify your coalition's strengths and challenges in fostering cultural competence.

Part 2:

1. Form into groups.
2. Share your coalition's strengths and challenges with the other group members.
3. Based on the discussion – each group should identify up to five (5) specific actions a coalition can take to foster cultural competence among the coalition members, coalition partners and the community as a whole. Record the five actions on a newsprint.
4. Post the newsprint and review other groups' posting.
5. Discuss the results.

