Mental Health Policies & Procedures: *A Manager's Toolkit*

Cultural Competency- Fact Sheet

Source: Cultural Competency Assessment Tool, Vancouver Ethnocultural Advisory Committee of the Ministry for Children and Families, British Columbia: http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/pubdocs/bcdocs/339295/assessment_tool.pdf

DEFINITIONS

Cultural Competency	Refers to the ability of organizations and systems to function and perform effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross 1989; Kunisawa 1988; Sue et al, 1992)
Cultural Diversity	Refers to the unique characteristics that all of us possess that distinguish us as individuals and identify us as belonging to a group or groups. Diversity transcends concepts of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability and age. Diversity offers strength and richness to the whole (Hastings Institute)

Principles of Cultural Competence

❖ **Inclusiveness** – refers to an organizational system where decision-making includes perspectives from diverse points of views, from within and without the organization, where appropriate
(Hastings Institute, with reference to Byron Kunisawa and Websters New Collegiate)

❖ **Reflecting** cultural differences – refers to the process of identifying or recognizing cultural diversity. Reflection is demonstrated through organizational statements and policies.

❖ **Valuing** cultural differences – refers to the process of regarding highly cultural differences. Valuation is demonstrated through the organization's actions, practices and implementation of policies.

❖ **Employment Equity** – Describes approaches to achieving equal access to employment for all groups in Canada. The primary focus of employment equity is the prevention, identification and removal of discriminatory barriers in an organization's recruitment, hiring, training, retention, career pathing, promotion and income policies and practices. (Institute for Managing Diversity)

❖ **Service Equity** – ability to provide accessible and relevant services to the targeted groups.

To assess the cultural competency of your organization, visit:
http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/pubdocs/bcdocs/339295/assessment_tool.pdf.
This is an excellent tool/checklist that will help determine your organization's strengths and weaknesses

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Learn More:

Better Communication, Better Care: Provider Tools to Care for Diverse Populations
http://www.iceforhealth.org/library/documents/ICE_Booklet.pdf

Culture Counts: *A Roadmap to Health Promotion*
Best Practices for Developing Health Promotion Initiatives in Mental Health and Substance Use with Ethnocultural Communities
http://www.camh.net/About_CAMH/Health_Promotion/Community_Health_Promotion/Culture_Counts_Guide/CultureCountsGuide8.pdf

Cultural Competency: Best Practices

Source: Cultural Awareness Tool (Australia); www.mocmhc.org/documents/Cultural%20Awareness%20Tool.pdf

Understand:

- All people are cultural beings
- Culture influences all people's norms, values and behaviours
- Culture influences how all people understand, interpret and respond to themselves, other people and the world around them
- Because of culture, all people are inclined to be ethnocentric
- Despite the strength of cultural influences, individuals within any culture will vary considerably

Be aware of the 'traps':

- Stereotyping: making assumptions about the characteristics of an individual, which are based on a standard, simplistic characterisation of their culture
- Ignoring the influence of class or socioeconomic status on attitudes, beliefs and actions; class differences within a culture are often more significant than differences between cultures.

> ***Culture…***
> "affects the way people label illness, identify symptoms, seek help, decide whether someone is normal or abnormal, set expectations for therapists and clients, give themselves personal meaning, and understand morality and altered states of consciousness" (Ridley et al., 1998).

Build Client/Counsellor Rapport:

Source: Cultural Competency: A Practical Guide for Mental Health Service Providers, www.hogg.utexas.edu/uploads/documents/**cultural_competency_guide**.pdf

- Determine, given the client's cultural background, who should be present at a meeting, and who is recognized as a family authority and should be included in key input about the client's current functioning.
- Briefly describe the suggested referral and explain the role of each participant. Acknowledge that this may differ from what the client and the family's prior experience with help-seeking would lead them to expect. Also explain confidentiality, what it does/does not cover.
- Help the client/family prioritize their problems and determine what they perceive as the important goals. What are their expectations? How will they know when the goals have been achieved?
- Assess possible problems in light of other factors, such as the need for food, shelter, and employment, or stressful interactions with other agencies. Provide the necessary assistance in developing and maintaining environmental supports.
- Determine the assets and resources available to the client and family. Has the client, or other family members or friends dealt with similar problems? What cultural resources have they turned to in the past? What was the outcome? Summarize the problem as you understand it and make sure the client knows you understand it.
- Discuss the possible participation of family members. Within the family, determine the hierarchical structure as well as the degree of acculturation of the different members. Focus on the problems produced by conflicting values.
- Discuss possible consequences of achieving the goals for the individual, family, and community.

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Develop the Essential Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes to Developing Cultural Competence:
Source: Cultural Competency: A Practical Guide for Mental Health Service Providers,
www.hogg.utexas.edu/uploads/documents/**cultural_competency_guide**.pdf

Ensuring the provision of culturally competent services to clients places a great deal of responsibility upon the mental health professional. In particular, there are a number of generally expected levels of knowledge, skills and attributes that are essential to providing culturally competent mental health services. For example:

Knowledge
- Knowledge of clients' culture (history, traditions, values, family systems, artistic expressions).
- Knowledge of the impact of racism and poverty on behaviour, attitudes, values, and disabilities.
- Knowledge of the help-seeking behaviours of ethnic minority clients.
- Knowledge of the roles of language, speech patterns, and communication styles in different communities.
- Knowledge of the impact of the social service policies on clients of colour.
- Knowledge of the resources (i.e., agencies, persons, informal helping networks, research) available for ethnic minority clients and communities.
- Recognition of how professional values may either conflict with or accommodate the needs of clients from different cultures.
- Knowledge of how power relationships within communities or institutions impact different cultures.

Professional Skills
- Techniques for learning the cultures of ethnic minority client groups.
- Ability to communicate accurate information on behalf of culturally different clients and their communities.
- Ability to openly discuss racial and ethnic differences/issues and to respond to culturally based cues.
- Ability to assess the meaning that ethnicity has for individual clients.
- Ability to discern between the symptoms of intra-psychic stress and stress arising from the social structure.
- Interviewing techniques that help the interviewer understand and accommodate the role of language in the client's culture.
- Ability to utilize the concepts of empowerment on behalf of culturally different clients and communities.
- Ability to use resources on behalf of ethnic minority clients and their communities.
- Ability to recognize and combat racism, racial stereotypes, and myths among individuals and institutions.
- Ability to evaluate new techniques, research, and knowledge as to their validity and applicability in working with people of colour.

Personal Attributes:
- Personal qualities that reflect genuineness, empathy, non-possessiveness, warmth, and a capacity to respond flexibly to a range of possible solutions.
- Acceptance of ethnic differences between people.
- A willingness to work with clients of different ethnic backgrounds.
- Articulation and clarification of the worker's personal values, stereotypes, and biases about his/her own and others' ethnicity and social class. Also, recognizing ways that these views may accommodate or conflict with the needs of clients from different cultures.