

Cultural Competency

Presented by Jill Niemczyk of Wisconsin Area Health Education Centers



✦ "To be culturally competent doesn't mean you are an authority in the values and beliefs of every culture. What it means is that you hold a deep respect for cultural differences and are eager to learn, and willing to accept, that there are many ways of viewing the world."

~ Okokon O. Udo

The Five Elements of Cultural Competency are:

1. Awareness and acceptance of differences
2. Self-awareness of individual or organizational culture
3. Understanding the dynamics of difference
4. Integration of cultural knowledge within individuals and systems
5. Adaptation to diversity

The Cultural Competency Continuum

Cultural Destructiveness:

- Doesn't notice differences
- Attributes subhuman qualities to others
- Disregards civil rights
- Uses power to control, exploit, destroy

Cultural Incapacity:

- Creates negative stereotypes
- Promotes superiority of own culture
- Unrealistic fears
- Supports segregation

Cultural Blindness:

- Blames Victims
- Lacks information
- "Rescues" people of color
- Ignores cultural strengths
- "All people are the same"

Cultural Pre Competence:

- Enjoys differences
- No right answer
- Recognizes own weakness
- Willing to try new ways
- Seeks information from cultures

Cultural Competence:

- Rewards difference
- Adapts service plans
- Seeks advice about cultures
- Makes informed decisions
- Can cross cultural boundaries

Cultural Proficiency:

- Adapt to cultural situations
- Comfortable with own cultural identity
- Holds diversity in high esteem
- Advocates for competence throughout system

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Working effectively through an Interpreter

- ❖ Conduct a pre-session
- ❖ Speak in first person
- ❖ During the interview, speak directly to the client
- ❖ Speak at an even pace in short segments
- ❖ Everything said is interpreted.
- ❖ Be aware of language concepts

Be aware that many concepts you express may have no linguistic, or even conceptual, equivalent in other languages. The interpreter may have to paint word pictures of the terms you use; this may take longer than your original speech.

The Difference:

Interpreters transmit a word they hear in one language into another language.
Spoken = Interpreter

Translators transmit written messages from one language into another language.
Written = Translator

A challenge to you:

In the next few weeks put into practice the three steps toward cultural competence by:

1. **Awareness** - examine your own cultural beliefs and your learned biases and prejudices towards other cultures. Write on journal entry or verbally share what you discovered about yourself with someone you trust. *Explore the implicit association web-site.*
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>
2. **Knowledge** - read an article, book or watch a movie to learn more about the historical, societal, political and/or religious influences that affect the worldview of others.
3. **Skills** - using what you learned in the first two steps: awareness and knowledge have a conversation with a patient or staff person that is meaningful. Instead of misunderstanding we will have powerful partnerships between individuals and institutions.