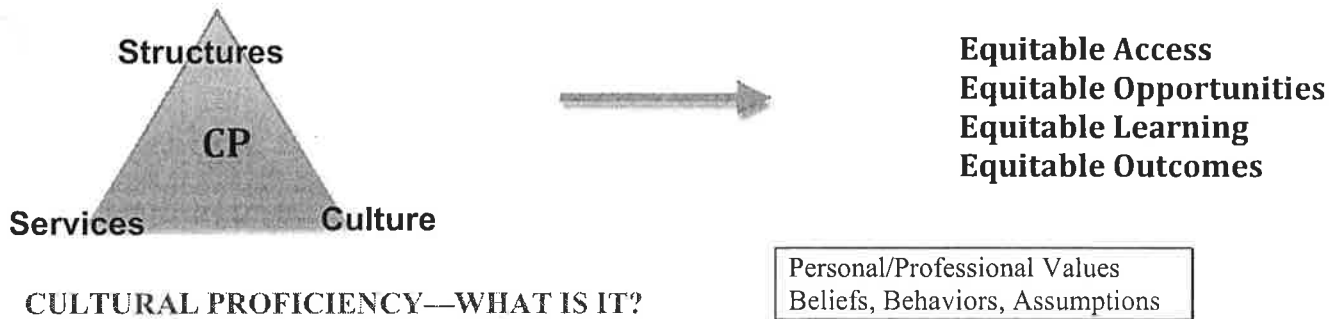


The Cultural Proficiency Framework

HANDOUT



CULTURAL PROFICIENCY—WHAT IS IT?

It's **PERSONAL**

- It is an inside-out approach and a model for change;
- It is about being intentional about how we react to those different from us;
- It is a mind set; a way of being; a paradigm shift for some.

It's **ORGANIZATIONAL**

- It is the use of specific tools for effectively *assessing* our progress and *describing*, and *planning* for the changes we want to make;
- It is the policies and practices at the organizational level, and values and behaviors of the leader that enable effective cross cultural interactions among service providers, families, and community partners.

CULTURAL PROFICIENCY—THE FOUR TOOLS

#1. Cultural Proficiency—Guiding Principles

The Guidelines are the *core values*—the assumptive foundation upon which cultural proficiency is built.

- Culture is a predominant force; you cannot NOT be influenced by culture.
- People have group and individual identities.
- There is diversity within and between cultures.
- Unique cultural needs are respected.
- **People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture.**

#2. Cultural Proficiency—5 Essential Elements

The Essential Elements set the *behavioral standards* that guide our behavior.

- Name the differences: **Value** diversity.
- Claim differences: **Assess** your own cultural membership and status and that of others.
- Reframe the differences: **Manage** the dynamics of difference and cultural conflict.
- Change because of differences: **Adapt** to diversity.
- Train, teach and model new behaviors in all you do: **Institutionalize** cultural knowledge.

#3 Cultural Proficiency—Continuum of Practice

Six points along the Cultural Proficiency Continuum indicate unique ways of perceiving and responding to differences. (Destructiveness, Incapacity, Blindness, Pre-Competence, Competence & Proficiency)

#4. Cultural Proficiency—Understanding the Barriers to CP and the Dynamics of Difference and Cultural Power

- The presumption of entitlement and unearned privilege;
- Systems of oppression and privilege, perpetuating the domination/victimization of individuals and groups;
- Unawareness of the need to adapt;
- Resistance to change, not recognizing need to change/adapt, and believing only others need to adapt to you.

HOW TO GET THERE: Seven Strategies for Drawing Strength from Diversity (Chang, H. California Tomorrow)

1. Involve people from diverse neighborhoods and constituencies in program design and development; 2. Focus on assets and strengths; 3. Value the role that culture and language play in developing healthy families, individuals and communities; 4. Hire staff who reflect the community; 5. Create opportunities for people to spend time in different groupings—separate and integrated; 6. Use disaggregated data to hold programs accountable for equal access and equally good outcomes for all; children, youth and families; 7. Apply these principles in all interactions—with individuals, programs, organizations and policy making.

Adapted by S. Graham from Jungwirth, L., Lindsey, R.B., & Pahl, J. 2011

SIX Levels of Cultural Proficiency (Workplace and School Settings)

Cultural Destructiveness	Cultural Incapacity	Cultural Blindness	Cultural Precompetence	Cultural Competence	Cultural Proficiency
<p><i>"See the difference; stomp it out."</i></p> <p>Policies, practices, procedures, behaviors attempt to forbid, deny or limit aspects or displays of one's cultural difference. (<i>Intentional</i>)</p> <p>Eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genocide, exclusion laws; laws denying basic human rights. Little/no support for differences that impact performance or success. Avoiding/disallowing cultural displays, observations or artifacts. Denying time-off for religious observance. Dress codes prohibit wearing culturally or religiously appropriate garments. Policy restricting use of one's primary language in the workplace. Retribution for displaying photo of same-gender partner in one's office. 	<p><i>"See the difference; make it wrong."</i></p> <p>Policies, practices, behaviors promote the superiority of one culture while excluding, limiting, disrespecting, or disempowering another or other cultures. (<i>Can be intentional/unintentional</i>)</p> <p>Eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expecting "others" to change or "get-over" it. Blaming others for lack of progress. Practices meet only the needs of the majority culture(s). Holiday displays promote majority culture, while excluding, limiting or patronizing displays of other cultures. Patterns of recruitment hiring and promotion favor one group over another. Lowered expectations. Disproportionate allocation of resources. 	<p><i>"See the difference; act like you don't."</i></p> <p>Policies, practices, behaviors do not acknowledge differences among/between cultures, and promote the belief that everyone is served equally by the same policies and practices.</p> <p>Eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discomfort with difference. Assumed "meritocracy." Concern about "reverse discrimination." Blindness to the barriers encountered by some cultural groups. Avoidance of diversity issues is sanctioned and justified by the authority of the manager, majority opinion, or work tasks and schedules. Belief that agency-sanctioned curriculum benefits all equally. 	<p><i>"See the difference; may respond inappropriately or inconsistently."</i></p> <p>New policies, practices and behaviors are developed upon recognizing the limitations of previous knowledge and/or skill to effectively interact with others. Often these new practices are superficial, inappropriate or inconsistently applied.</p> <p>Eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegate diversity work to people of color or to a committee. Quick fix packages, short-term programs. Unclear rules, expectations. Limited accountability for some groups. Training for staff, not managers. Multicultural celebrations that promote surface aspects of culture(s). Accommodations for some groups but not others. 	<p><i>"See the difference; understand the difference that difference makes. Adapt to difference."</i></p> <p>Policies, practices, behaviors include diverse perspectives and result in personal and organizational adaptations to meet the needs of diverse groups. Risk-taking behaviors that support equity and fairness are encouraged, modeled and supported.</p> <p>Eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value difference and healthy divergence more than commonality, similarity and compliance. Assess aspects of culture and status in the self and others and how these impact ones access, success and effectiveness. Leverage and manage conflict to learn/grow rather than fearing or avoiding conflict or differences of opinion. Encourage divergence, rather than agreement or consensus. Use cultural knowledge to develop the self and organization. Adapt to difference. Engage in ongoing learning about the self and others. Enact new standards for behavior and practice. 	<p><i>"See the difference; respond positively. Envision and seek organizational equity, and social justice."</i></p> <p>Policies practices and behaviors esteem difference; On-going learning about ones' and the organizations' cultures: Make a difference in the organization and in society.</p> <p>Eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alliance with and advocacy for under served cultural groups, especially those to which "I" do not belong. Seek interdependence. Seek new friends and relationships. Embrace personal change and transformation. Seek feedback from clients and underserved groups to assess personal and organizational effectiveness. Envision the organization as the instrument for creating lasting social justice and democracy.

Self-Assessment–The Five Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency–WHO you are

Read each of the **essential elements** and the indicators below it. Place a mark in the column that best describes your ability to describe manifestations of each indicator. This is not a test, but a needs assessment to provide you with a profile of what you already know and what you have yet to learn. Marking *Yes* indicates you can provide the requested descriptions. Marking *No* indicates that you do not have sufficient knowledge to provide the descriptions. Marking *Not Sure* indicates that you may be struggling with the meaning of the description or are not certain if you can provide the requested descriptions. After marking your responses, assess which **ELEMENTS** (in bold face) are easiest for you and which are most challenging to understand, describe and demonstrate.

Assessing Cultural Knowledge

YES NO NOT SURE

I can name and describe the cultural groups to which I belong.

I am aware of the status of some of the cultural groups to which I belong.

I can describe ways in which my culture(s) affect those I work and interact with who are like me.

I can describe ways in which my culture(s) affect those who are different from me.

Valuing Diversity

I can describe how inviting “various voices to the table” maximizes learning and perspectives and optimize the effectiveness of decisions.

I can describe how aspects of my and others’ cultures are assets and strengths to optimize effective teaching, learning, working and leadership.

Managing the Dynamics of Culture

YES NO NOT SURE

I can describe effective strategies for resolving conflict.

I understand that conflict may naturally arise when talking about culture, but I do not let this deter my engaging with such conversations, because I know out of conflict comes learning and understanding.

I can describe some strategies for facilitating conversations and mitigating confusion in conversations about race, culture and ethnicity.

Adapting to Diversity

I can describe ways in which I change to meet the needs of people who are different from me.

I can describe ways to help others understand their effectiveness in meeting the needs of all students, customers or stakeholders.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge

I can describe ways that I and others in my organization can create cultures of collaboration and inclusive decision making in order to make a positive difference for the clients we serve.

I can describe ways for myself and my colleagues to continue to learn, deepen our conversations and grow our individual and collective capacity to close outcome and service gaps for the clients we serve.
