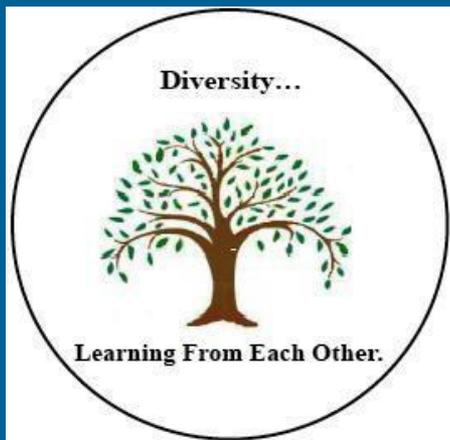


Cultural Competency and Diversity



Presented by the
CMHA-CEI Diversity Advisory Council



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Reviewed 9/2025

Developing Cultural Competence

OBJECTIVE OF THIS COURSE:

This course is designed to introduce the basic core elements of Cultural Competence and to emphasize that Cultural Competence is not simply a concept to be learned, but an ever-growing awareness, understanding and acceptance of cultural differences and how those differences impact our lives.



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What Is The Difference Between Diversity and Cultural Competency?

- Here at CMHA-CEI, we view **Diversity** as going beyond Race and Gender. CMHA-CEI takes into consideration all aspects of an individual such as: geographical location, education, traditions, family values, economic, living conditions and language just to name a few.
- To be **Culturally Competent**, our employees understand and are respectful of beliefs, language, interpersonal styles and behaviors of individuals and families receiving CMHA-CEI services.



National Center for Cultural Competence defines Cultural Competence as:

“A set of values, behaviors, attitudes and practices within a system, organization, program or among individuals which enables them to work effectively cross culturally. Further, it refers to the ability to **honor and respect** the beliefs, language, interpersonal styles and behaviors of **individuals and families receiving services**, as well as staff who are providing such services. Cultural competence is a **dynamic, ongoing, developmental process** that requires a long term commitment and is achieved over time.”



Key Points

- The acceptance and respect for difference;
- A continuous self-assessment regarding culture;
- An attention to the dynamics of difference;
- The ongoing development of cultural knowledge; and
- The resources and flexibility within service models to meet the needs of minority populations.



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What Is “Culture”?

○ CULTURE IS:

- Culture can be defined as the shared values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, folklore and institutions of a group of people who are unified by race, ethnicity, language, nationality or religion/spirituality.
- Culture can be impacted by education, geographic location and economic status. There can also be unique sub-groups within a culture.

Some Cultural Considerations

Celebrations
Physical Conditions
Race
Religion/Spirituality
Sexual Orientation
Sub-populations
Language

Music
Economic
Education
Ethnicity
Gender Identification
Geographical



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Following are some Cultural Considerations that may impact how you would interact with consumers.

- Personal Space
- Slang
- Hand Gestures
- Mental Health and Addiction Treatment
- Dress
- Punctuality
- Role of the Church
- Importance of Family
- Authority Figures
- Death and Dying
- Sexuality, Gender Roles and Relationships
- Politics



Why Is Cultural Competency Important?



- First and foremost, cultural competency promotes effective interventions which lays the groundwork for positive outcomes in our work with consumers, our interactions with co-workers and members of our community.
- Second, there are Federal, State and Accrediting Body mandates that require a culturally competent practice.



What Are Some Barriers to Cultural Competency?

- **Stereotypes:** exaggerated beliefs or fixed ideas about various groups that distort, devalue or exaggerate particular qualities.
- **Ethnocentrism:** An assumption or belief that one's own group or cultural approach offers the "only way", or "the right way" or the "best way" to view people and events.
 - We are *ethnocentric* when we use our own interpretations, beliefs or biases to interpret another's ideas, beliefs or behaviors. We are also ethnocentric when we "assume similarity".
- **Fear:** Of the unknown. What we don't understand about someone can be fearful.





"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is of the unknown".

— H.P. Lovecraft



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Why Does Cultural Competency Matter to CMHA-CEI?

- Developing culturally sensitive practices can help reduce barriers to:



- Effective treatment utilization – (*consumer focus*).
- Effectively dealing with the organization’s multiple facets and functions – (*intra-organizational focus*).
- Effectively working with our community partners and stakeholders – (*inter-organizational focus*).



Clinical Implications of Cultural Competency

Rapport building is a critical component of competency development.

Why:

Because rapport can help to facilitate the development of trust and enhance the individual's investment and continued participation in treatment."



The Road To Cultural Competence Begins With ALL OF US!

- 1) *Awareness and acceptance of the wide range of cultural diversity.*
- 2) *Awareness of one's own cultural values and identity.*
- 3) *Understanding how differences impact a wide variety of relationships.*
- 4) *Knowledge of the cultures of consumers, co-workers, community partners and stakeholders.*
- 5) *Utilizing this information to begin to adapt approaches and skills.*



- Be aware of differences in values, communication styles, spirituality, and definitions of family (just to name a few) AND accept those differences. Moreover, it is important to embrace those differences as those are the consumer's allies in healing.

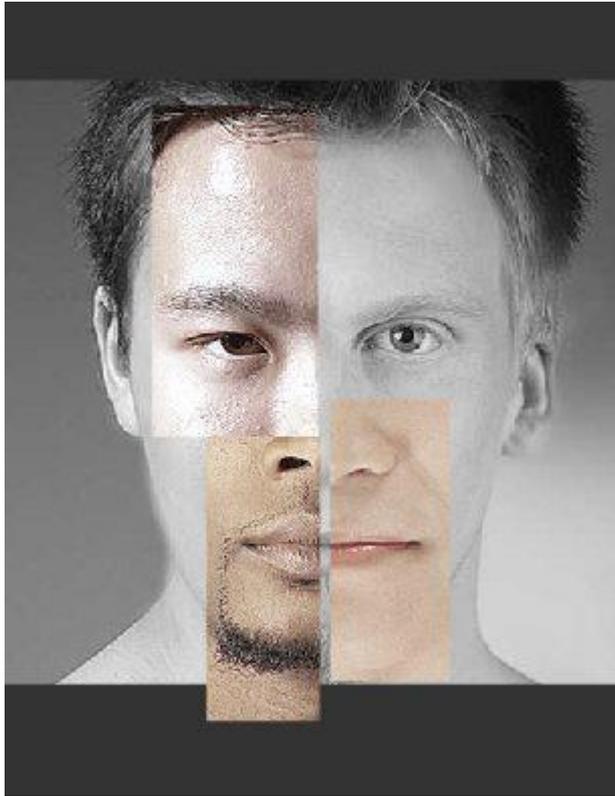


How cultural conditioning influences our beliefs

○ Culture

- Provides people with a design for living and interpreting their environment;
- Shapes how people see their world and structure their community and family life (worldviews);
- Helps determine the person's values and attitudes about the world around them.



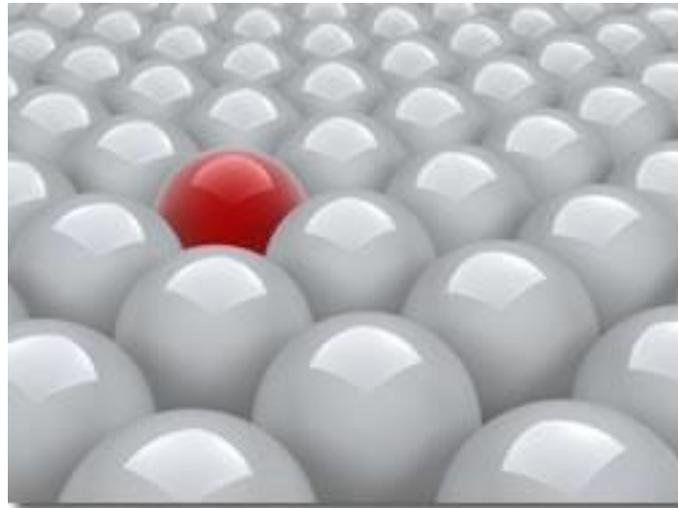


- It is important to realize how differences can either **help** or **hinder** the way that services are provided and the impact of our many relationships and interactions.

- It is important to take the time to learn as much as possible about the culture of those who could potentially use program services as well as those we interact with and to make a conscious effort to learn their values, how they view and define healing and work, the nature of their social structure, etc.



- Historically, people of color and in the minority have always been expected to adapt to the dominant culture's institutions in order to access services and be successful at work.



Some of the factors that may require adaptations include:

- Where services are offered;
- Communication styles;
- Places you refer consumers and how the organization communicates these referrals for help;
- Staffing considerations, having bilingual resources available and ensuring that the décor reflects diversity, etc.
- Times of the day and days of the week that the organization is providing services; and
- Decision making and conflict resolution methods.



When Providing Services We Need To...

- Be a reflection of the demographics prevalent in the community
- Focus on screening and assessments: risk and resiliency, strengths, prevention and intervention.
- Ensure a holistic approach to treatment.

Remember

to be sensitive to others.



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Remember



- **We Don't** use labels that negatively categorize people;
- **We Don't** mis-communicate through cultural ignorance or insensitivity;
- **We Don't** refer to people as *being* their circumstances rather than *experiencing* their circumstances; (i.e. referring to someone as “mentally ill” as opposed to a person with mental illness”); and
- **We Don't** use your own culture as the norm.



Key Points

- The process of becoming culturally competent is a long-term, ongoing process.
- Cultural competency exists on a continuum from being culturally destructive to culturally competent.
- Take a personal inventory, it is important that we all plan to make the necessary adaptations.



Key Points



- It is critical we strive toward cultural competency. There are people from different cultures, backgrounds and faiths, etc. in our communities in need of our services.
- We need to remove barriers and embrace our differences in order to be as effective as possible in our interactions with our consumers, co-workers and members of our community.



How to find CMHA-CEI procedures

- Go to the outline column on the right and open the “References to Related CMHA-CEI Procedures” to access links to:
 - Cultural Competency 2.1.8B
 - Training for Staff 2.1.8I



THANK YOU!

for completing
“Cultural Competency”

You must complete the test to receive
credit for this course.



*We all live with the objective of being
happy; our lives are all different and
yet the same. - Anne Frank*



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