

Cultural Competency

A Knowledge to Practice Program



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Learning Objectives

By the end of this tutorial, you will:

- Understand what it means to be culturally competent
- Understand why cultural competence is important in health care
- Have the skills to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services

Outline

Throughout this tutorial, you will cover the following topics:

- Defining cultural competency
- The National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC)
- Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) and their standards

So what is cultural competency?

Cultural competence is a set of “congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural settings.”

It is one of the main ingredients in closing the disparities gap in health care!

Watch this video about cultural competency, which features Dr. Tamu Nolfo, the Project Manager of the Community Alliance for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS).



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTh3pe8N3DQ>

Let's take a closer look at the two components of cultural competency.

Culture

- refers to integrated patterns of human behavior that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups.

Competence

- implies the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by consumers and their communities.

**Well why do we need to be culturally
competent?**



The increasing population growth in the U.S. of racial and ethnic communities and linguistic groups, each with its own cultural traits and health profiles, presents a challenge to health care providers in this country.

Culture and language may influence:

- Health, healing, and wellness belief systems
- How illness, disease, and their causes are perceived
- The behaviors of patients/consumers who are seeking health care and their attitudes towards health care providers
- As well as the delivery of services by the provider who looks at the world through his or her own limited set of values

Cultural competency results in positive outcomes for patients/consumers, including...

Greater patient satisfaction

Appropriate preventive services, diagnosis, and treatment

Increased adherence to medical advice

Improved overall health status

Cultural competence is so important that there is even a National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC).



National Center for

Cultural Competence

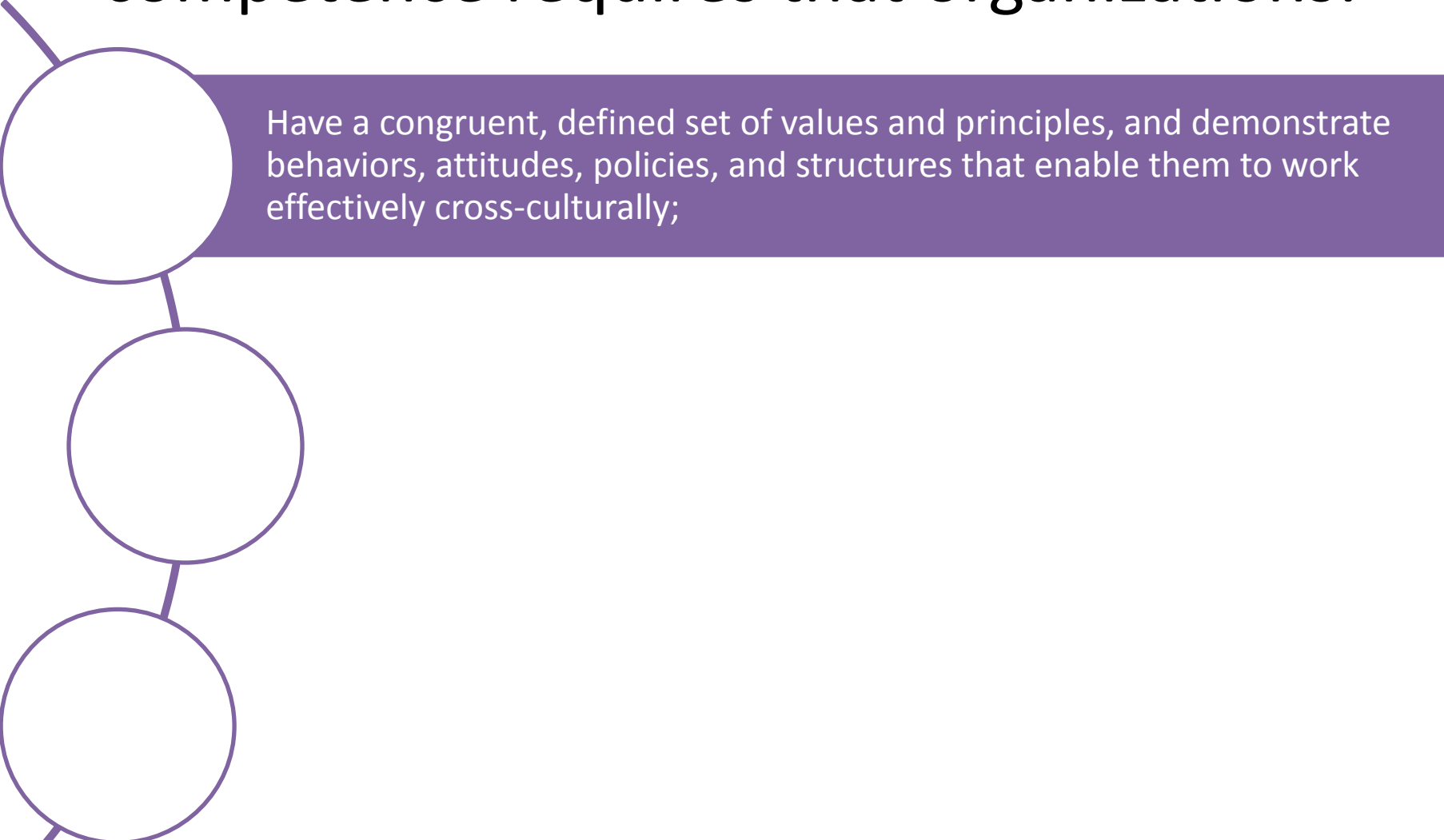
*Georgetown University
Center for Child and Human Development*

The mission of the NCCC is to increase the capacity of health care and mental health care programs to **design, implement, and evaluate culturally and linguistically competent service delivery systems** to address growing diversity, persistent disparities, and to promote health and mental health equity.



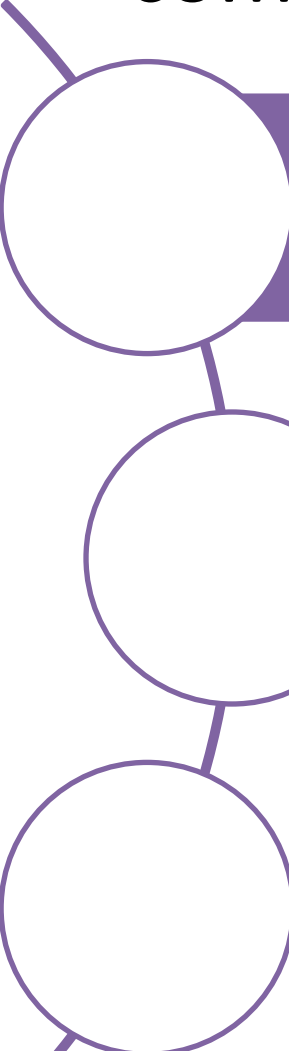
They have developed a set of checklists to assess cultural and linguistic competence.

According to their checklist, cultural competence requires that organizations:




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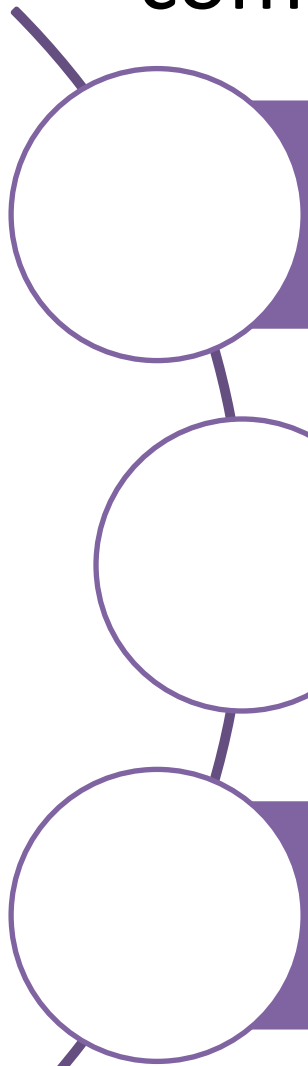


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Have the capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics of difference, (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge, and (5) adapt to the diversity and cultural contexts of communities they serve; and



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Incorporate the above into all aspects of policymaking, administration, practice, and service delivery and systematically involve consumers, key stakeholders, and communities.

**There are also the National Standards
for Culturally and Linguistically
Appropriate Services (CLAS) in
Health Care.**



The CLAS standards are:

- The collective set of culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS) mandates, guidelines, and recommendations issued by the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health intended to inform, guide, and facilitate required and recommended practices related to culturally and linguistically appropriate health services.



**We are just going to focus on the first
three standards, which are about
Culturally Competent Care.**



Standard 1

- Health care organizations should ensure that patients/consumers receive from all staff members effective, understandable, and respectful care that is provided in a manner compatible with their cultural health beliefs and practices and preferred language

This includes...

Providing an environment in which patients from diverse cultural backgrounds feel comfortable discussing their cultural health beliefs and practices in the context of negotiating treatment options

Using community workers as a check on the effectiveness of communication and care

Encouraging patients to express their spiritual beliefs and, where appropriate, integrating these approaches into treatment plans

Standard 2

- Health care organizations should implement strategies to recruit, retain, and promote at all levels of the organization a diverse staff and leadership that are representative of the demographic characteristics of the service area

For example, watch this video on the importance of having a diverse staff.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z52SSqa8t1k>

Standard 3

- Health care organizations should ensure that staff at all levels and across all disciplines receive ongoing education and training in culturally and linguistically appropriate service delivery



Training videos, like the following, can be used to help educate your staff about cultural competency.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNLtAj0wy6I>

Conclusion

- Being culturally competent involves being respectful of your patients' cultural differences, having a diverse staff, and making sure every staff member is trained in cultural competence
- Cultural competence is important in a health care setting because it helps reduce the disparities in health

References

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