

Cultural Competency

Definition of Cultural Competency

- ✓ The willingness and ability to interact respectfully and effectively with individuals and groups, acknowledging the common and different elements of our cultural identities.

Elements of Cultural Competency

- Knowledge of self and personal cultural influences
- Awareness of others' cultures
- Effective communication skills
- Respectful behaviors

Awareness of Self

- Recognizing assumptions and selective perceptions that we make about ourselves and others
- Recognizing how we categorize or put people into "slots" to make them similar or different from ourselves
- Using context to help us interpret events and situations
- Looking at ourselves from an objective observer perspective
- Seeking out fresh information to confirm or refute our perceptions

Dimensions of Cultural Awareness

- 5 senses (things you notice): What you see, hear, smell, taste and feel about a culture
- Norms: The unstated external socially-driven behaviors in a culture
- Values: The unstated internal beliefs an individual holds

How Values Differ Among Cultures

- ✓ Rules versus relationships
- ✓ Individual versus group significance
- ✓ Reserved versus emotional display
- ✓ Respect for achieved versus inherent status
- ✓ Time-driven versus flexible time priority

Effective Communication Skills

Build rapport

- Use eye contact
- Concentrate on the message
- Keep an open mind
- Restate and confirm understanding periodically
- Appeal to logic and emotions
- Listen carefully

Effective Communication Skills (Continued)

Communicate with your entire body

- Posture
- Head movement, facial expressions
- Vocal qualities
- Eye contact
- Touching
- Personal space

Give and receive feedback to ensure understanding

- Be specific
- Use "I" statements
- State what you would like instead

Hall's Patterns of Communication

- ✓ High context: Communication tends to be indirect; nonverbal cues and signals are essential to comprehending the message
- ✓ Low context: Communication tends to be direct, specific and literal with most of the information contained in the actual message itself

Building Cultural Bridges

- Focus on similarities instead of differences
- Work itself forms common ground
- Be willing to get to know people as individuals
- Foster an inclusive atmosphere

Strategies for Handling Sensitive Situations

- Count to ten
- Consult a trusted confidant
- Practice positive intent
- Stay focused on the situation itself and avoid personal attacks, even if you feel you have been attacked
- Look at the situation from the other side and see if it you discover any new understanding or perspective
- Decide upon the importance of the situation and if it is worth your while to act on it.