

Cultural Competency Best Practices in Organizations

Training and Recruitment

- New employee orientation includes a discussion about the benefits of diversity.
- All three learning styles (visual, verbal and kinesthetic) and behavioral interviewing techniques are used to interview potential employees.
- Employee and volunteer training is conducted using all three modes of communication: visual, verbal and kinesthetic.
- Relationship building is incorporated into all of our volunteer trainings.

Organizational Structure and Process

- The organization has clearly measurable goals regarding diversity.
- There is a diversity advisory council which reports directly to the CEO.
- The organization's board of directors appropriately reflects the diversity of the community it serves.
- The organization regularly conducts multicultural audits and assessments.
- Diverse groups are consulted regarding marketing, leadership and program delivery.
- Euro-Americans (a.k.a. white/Caucasian) employees are engaged in every aspect of the diversity program.
- Diversity is emphasized as an integral part of the organization by including the topic in organizational communications, such as presentations, publications, voice mail, e-mail, bulletin boards, etc.
- Products and services are customized to meet the unique needs of people from diverse cultures.
- All volunteer trainings include a discussion about how to adapt program to different cultures.

Workplace Climate

- Diversity is embraced by senior management.
- Employees feel comfortable in discussing others' differences such as dress, cultural practices and family relationships.
- Acceptance of modern variations in professional appearance (e.g. tattoos, piercings, ethnic or colorful hair)
- We have a performance management process which includes diversity as a dimension on which people receive feedback on their behavior.
- Employees have a regular formal process in which to evaluate their supervisors, including how they address diversity.
- The organization provides flexible benefits which cater to the needs of non-traditional employees.
- College-credit internship programs for marketing, psychology, business, and equine science as well as outdoor recreation and education
- Health insurance that includes mental health coverage and domestic partner benefits
- Descriptions of work weeks that include policies for those who honor a Saturday or Sunday Sabbath
- Child care assistance and maternity and paternity leave
- Competency is more important than politics for advancement in this organization.
- There are a lot of unwritten rules about how to get along and succeed here.

Celebration of Diversity

- This organization celebrates diversity months like Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Pacific Islander Month, etc.
- A variety of holidays that reflect the diversity of the surrounding community are celebrated in the organization (including Hannukah, Christmas and Kwanzaa).
- Diversity celebrations are held that include more than just ethnic food and dance. Discussions are also held about the benefits and challenges of differences as well.
- We provide people with the opportunity to educate each other and to celebrate their diversity through events such as lunch and learns, guest speakers, exhibits, etc.



Cultural Competence Continuum

Determine where your organization fits along the cultural competence continuum. The following examples indicate levels of cultural competence of systems, agencies, or professionals:

Cultural Destructiveness Practices which seek to denigrate and destroy other cultures.

Cultural Incapacity The organization or individual does not intentionally seek to be culturally destructive but rather lacks the capacity to help diverse clients or communities.

Cultural Blindness An organization or individual believes that culture makes no difference and that we are all the same. All populations are expected to assimilate and adapt to the services that best serve the dominant culture.

Cultural Pre-competence There is an acceptance and respect for differences and continuing self-assessment regarding organizational culture. The culturally competent organization works to hire unbiased employees.

Advanced Cultural Competence This point on the continuum is characterized by holding culture in high esteem The culturally proficient organization hires staff who are specialists in culturally competent practice. Such an organization advocates for cultural competence throughout the system and improved relations between cultures throughout society.

Cross, T. (1988). "Cultural Competence Continuum." *Focal Point, The Bulletin of The Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health*, Portland State University.

