

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURALLY COMPETENT SERVICES

The following guiding principles have been developed as a tool for counties in creating a culturally and linguistically sensitive system of care. They are intended to clarify the activities required in the implementation and oversight of this task. Identification, development, promulgation, and adoption of culturally competent best practice guidelines for care must be an integral part of ongoing culturally competent systems of care. Cultural competence is a means to eliminating cultural, racial and ethnic disparities. Cultural competence enhances the ability of the whole system to incorporate the languages, cultures, beliefs and practices of its clients into the service. In this way all clients benefit from services that address their needs from the foundation of their own particular culture.

1. Mental health and substance use service disparities for cultural, racial and ethnic populations must be identified throughout the system of care. Subsequently, strategies for elimination of these disparities must be developed and implemented.
2. Cultural competence must be supported at all levels of the system including policy, programs, operations, treatment, research and investigation, training and quality improvement.
3. Oversight of cultural competence activities is provided by the Cultural Competence/Ethnic Services Manager who functions as an expert advisor to the leadership body of the organization.
4. Monitoring and evaluation of Cultural Competence Plans and activities must be an integral component of quality improvement.
5. A process must be established and implemented for obtaining client, community, and staff input related to cultural competence planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
6. Ongoing training to professional, administrative, and support personnel must be culturally competent in order to effectively address the needs of cultural, racial and ethnic populations.
7. Commitment to cultural competence must be evident in mental health and substance use strategic planning and budgeting. Allocations that support cultural competence activities must be included in annual budgets.
8. Human Resource recruitment strategies must be established in order to ensure adequate levels of staff from diverse populations in the workforce. Educational opportunities and other retention efforts must be emphasized.

9. Mental health services must be responsive to the numerous stressors experienced by cultural, racial and ethnic populations that have a negative impact on the emotional and psychological state of individuals.
10. Professional, administrative, and support staff should reflect the diversity of the populations served.
11. Cultural, racial and ethnic populations must participate as active partners in all aspects of the services they are receiving, including outreach and engagement, assessment, plan development and treatment.
12. Services to cultural, racial and ethnic populations must include the family, a natural resource, when working with individuals experiencing emotional difficulties.
13. Formal and informal relationships with the community and other partners must be developed to address cultural competence issues, and delivery of culturally competent care.
14. Services must be culturally and linguistically appropriate with sensitivity to historical, cultural and religious experiences of diverse populations.
15. Treatment interventions, engagement strategies, and outreach services must be culturally and linguistically appropriate to engage and retain cultural, racial and ethnic populations and prevent hospitalization.
16. Mental health and substance use service systems must have policies, workplace design, and mechanisms in place to promote engagement of staff of diverse backgrounds.
17. Services must be accessible on a timely basis, and geographically convenient for all diverse populations.