

Cultural and Linguistic Competence Toolkit User Guide

Introduction

This user guide is meant to help organizations use the toolkit most effectively. It includes a “step by step” process for beginning the organizational journey of culture and linguistic competence. Acquiring cultural competence is an ongoing process requiring awareness and understanding of the role that culture plays in behavioral health. Organizations should continually work to improve their capacity in this area. They may begin their journey at different places and may not need to go through each step of the toolkit. Therefore, use of the guide should be informed by the outcomes of each organization’s self-assessment.

Step 1 – Organizational Values

- Commit to cultural and linguistic competence as a significant organizational value. Ensure that it is a genuine, lasting value of the organization’s leadership and then promote it as a key organizational asset.
- Review and update vision, mission and value statements to ensure they reflect the community and populations your organization serves.
- As part of strategic planning, ensure the organization has evaluated both the internal and external environment to include consumer, staff and community assessments. The organization should assess current needs and evaluate those factors influencing the delivery of services (funding sources, treatment mandates, change in health insurance, etc.). These assessments should provide additional insight into the demands and challenges of providing culturally responsive services.

Step 2 – Governance

- Assign a senior manager to oversee the development of the cultural and linguistic competence practices and services.
- Develop culturally competent governing and advisory boards.
- Establish a specific committee to lead and oversee the organization’s cultural and linguistic competence efforts.

Step 3 – Planning

- Create a demographic profile of the community served, current and future clients, staff, and governing body – (Toolkit Section II).
- Conduct an organizational self-assessment of cultural and linguistic competence – (Toolkit Section III)
- Develop a cultural and linguistic competence plan (Toolkit Section III – TIP 59 Chapter 4 and National CLAS standards).
- Review policy and procedure manual with a specific eye toward ensuring cultural and linguistic competence. Develop policies and procedures that are responsive to changes in client and community population.
- Incorporate planning for special populations; e.g. – veterans, deaf community, homeless, etc. – (Toolkit Section III, include a list of experts you can contact regarding specific populations).
- Engage staff, consumers, and your service community in planning, developing and implementing cultural and linguistic responsive services – **DO NOT CONDUCT THIS WORK IN A VACUUM.**

Step 4 – Evaluation and Monitoring

- Conduct self-assessments of the organization’s culture and linguistic competence annually (Toolkit Section III – Tip 59 Chapter 4).
- Update the organization’s cultural and linguistic competence plan based on annual self-assessment.