

Culturally Effective Organization

Organizations are made up of people and people bring cultural diversity to the workplace. Diversity can encompass many facets, including, but not limited to, gender, age, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, and disability. Many organizations are interested in meeting the needs of all people and are exploring ways to make their organizations more culturally responsive. As a health care organization, MCHC strives to provide high quality care to all people.

MCHC recognized the growing diversity in the community, and the associated racial and socio-economic imbalances which contribute to disparities in health and wellness outcomes. The organization embarked on a journey to becoming a culturally effective organization to improve health care quality and advance equity in the greater Manchester area. This toolkit shares the lessons learned and includes action steps, strategies and resources for other organizations as they begin their journey.

“To be culturally effective doesn’t mean you are an authority in the values and beliefs of every culture. What it means is that you hold a deep respect for cultural differences and are eager to learn, and willing to accept that there are many ways of viewing the world” Okokon O. Udo



This toolkit aims to provide background and resources for organizations to begin to think about ways to enhance internal systems that promote cultural effectiveness. The toolkit is based on an issue brief Culturally Effective Healthcare Organizations: A Framework for Success. There are seven elements organizations can pursue to enhance the capacity of organizations to become culturally effective. Some of the action steps an organization can implement may fall in more than one category. Resources and links are provided to learn more about each element. The toolkit will review not only WHY it is important to be culturally effective, but also HOW to make changes in YOUR organization.

Resources & Links

[Culturally Effective Healthcare Organizations: A Framework for Success](#)

[Culturally Effective Healthcare Organizations: A Framework for Success Executive Summary](#)

[A Roadmap to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care](#)

[A Roadmap and Best Practices for Organizations to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care- 6 steps.](#)

[US DHHS Think Cultural Health](#)

[Becoming a Culturally Effective Organization: A Case Study of the Manchester Community Health Center](#)

[Action Plan to Create a Culturally Effective Organization](#)

Organizations that have a desire to develop cultural effectiveness should emphasize leadership at all levels of the institution. Boards of Directors and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) can lead the way by including cultural effectiveness as an organizational priority. This can be done through strategic planning efforts and changes to policies and procedures. Executive leadership are key in promoting changes within the system that will embed cultural effectiveness as an organizational value. Leadership at other levels of the organization is also important so that positive messages are reinforced.

For example, Human resource (HR) personnel play an important role in recruitment and retention. Management information system (MIS/IT) staff facilitate the collection of REaL (race, ethnicity and language) data. Clinical and front desk staff use cross cultural communication skills to engage with patients and enhance patient care. Without strong and consistent organizational leadership, cultural effectiveness will not be integrated into the organizational culture on a permanent basis.

Resources & Links

Robert Wood Johnson Culturally Effective Toolkit

National CLAS Standards

National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care: A Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice

A Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice

Center for Linguistic & Cultural Competency in Health Care

Disparities Leadership Program

Cultural Competency Organizational Assessment: John Hopkins University

Assessment of Organizational Cultural Competence is the work of an Ad Hoc Committee of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) Multicultural Council.

Equity Leaders Fellowship

Action Steps

Conduct an organizational assessment of cultural effectiveness

Engage individuals representing different cultures on your board of directors

Review and update your mission, vision and values statements

References

Distinguishing Technical from Adaptive Challenges. Heifetz, R.A. & Linsky, M. (2002) Leadership on the Line, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.

Bettancourt, J.R., Green, A.R., Carillo, J.E., & Ananeh-Firempong, O. (2003). Defining Cultural Competence: A Practical Framework for Addressing Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Health and Health Care. Public Health Reports. 118(4). 293-302

Organizational policies and procedures are the backbone of how business is conducted. Staff use policies and procedures to guide their work. Leadership can demonstrate a commitment to cultural effectiveness by promoting inclusive policies and including language at supports equity in the organization's mission statement. By reviewing and updating institutional policies and procedures, organizations can systematically incorporate culturally effective strategies in the way they operate.

Manchester Community Health Center took a first step by conducting a review of its administrative and patient policies. Examples of policies include the development of a limited English proficiency plan, hiring and recruitment policies, training policies, safety and compliance.

Resources & Links

A Toolkit for Serving Diverse Communities, U.S. Administration on Aging Published Date: 2010

Policy Inventory

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) A federal interagency website

Communication Plan Template

American Speech Language Hearing Cultural Competence Checklist: Policy & Procedures

Community Toolbox

Sample job description and performance evaluation language

Using Workforce Practices to Drive Quality Improvement: A Guide for Hospitals. AHRQ & HRET

Sample Employment Equity Policy

Improving Quality and Performance: Cultural Competence and Workforce Diversity Strategies

NH DOE Office of Student Wellness Resource Guide: Supporting Culture and Diversity

Action Steps

Review existing policies and procedures using an equity lens.

Update organizational mission, vision and values statements to include a commitment to cultural effectiveness

Develop a Limited English Proficiency Plan using the Four Factor Analysis.

Include cultural competence in job descriptions and in employee appraisal systems

We use data every day to make decisions. Collecting accurate data on the populations we serve can provide valuable information that can be used in strategic planning as well as managing operations. Data can help address health disparities, meet Meaningful Use objectives and provide information that fosters innovation in service delivery for all patients, but is especially helpful in serving traditionally vulnerable groups. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care*, documents the importance of collecting accurate data.

The IOM also issued a report *The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding* which emphasizes the importance of addressing the needs of LGBT individuals. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 reinforce the need for collecting data to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are met. Organizations that use data to identify the patients or clients served can develop educational and programmatic interventions to improve the quality of care provided to all populations.

Resources & Links

[Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care](#)

[HHS Data Collection Standards for Race, Ethnicity, Primary Language, Sex, and Disability Status](#)

[Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity \(SOGI\)](#)

[Ask Every Patient REAL](#)

[The Health Research and Educational Trust Disparities Toolkit](#)

[Building Skills in Data Collection and Understanding Variation](#)

[Improving Data Collection across the Health Care System](#)

[Plan Do Check Act Quality Improvement Cycle](#)

[A Framework for Stratifying Race, Ethnicity and Language Data](#)

[CDC Health Disparities and Inequalities Report](#)

[MCHC Infographic Sample](#)

Action Steps

Review the data collected currently by your own organization. Does it give you enough information about the people you serve?

Provide training to front desk staff, providers and other staff to help collect the best data possible.

Develop dashboards or systems to track data over time and use the analysis to improve quality of care.

References

Zhang, X., Pérez-Stable, E. J., Bourne, P. E., Peprah, E., Duru, O. K., Breen, N., ... & Denny, J. (2017). Big Data Science: Opportunities and Challenges to Address Minority Health and Health Disparities in the 21st Century. *Ethnicity & Disease, 27*(2), 95-106.

“One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say.”

Edward Kennedy.

Listening is a key element of community engagement. Community engagement is the act of building a relationship with people in the community you serve. Research shows that organizations that involve members of the community in their planning and service delivery have improved quality, safety and customer satisfaction. There are different ways to engage members of the community in your organizational activities.

Resources & Links

[Guide to Patient and Family Engagement in Hospital Quality and Safety](#)

[Partnering to Improve Quality and Safety: A Framework to Working with Patient and Family Advisors](#)

[Patient and Family Advisory Councils: Advancing Culturally Effective Patient-Centered Care](#)

[Partnership for Patients](#)

[A Roadmap for Patient & Family Engagement in Health Care](#)

[Improved Patient Engagement for LGBT Populations](#)

[Growing Your Capacity to Engage Diverse Communities](#)

[Preparing Members of a Patient and Family Advisory Council](#)

[Engagement Toolbox](#)

[Bassler, A. et al., “Developing Effective Citizen Engagement: A How-to Guide for Community Leaders.” Center for Rural America, 2008](#)

[Addressing Chronic Disease through Community Health Workers](#)

[Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation](#)

[Facilitation guide for community engagement](#)

Federally qualified health centers have at least 51% of their Boards of Directors who are patients. Hospitals and community organizations may create Patient and Family Advisory Boards. Community Health Workers (CHWs) are part of the health care workforce who are trusted members of the community. CHWs act as the bridge between the community and the health care system. Consumers can be helpful in providing input to planning, programming, marketing and promotion, web sites and web portals and strategies for meeting community needs. People in the community bring various perspectives that can improve quality, safety, experience and ensure that the needs of the community are being met.

Action Steps

Invite community members to participate in Patient and Family Advisory Councils (PFACs) to share in decision-making and providing feedback.

Identify community leaders who can participate in assessing community needs.

Hire a Community Health Worker to help strengthen the connections between the community and the health and social service system.

References

Thompson, B., Molina, Y., Biswanath, K, Warnecke, R. & Prelip, M. (2016) Strategies to Empower Communities to Reduce Health Disparities, *Health Affairs*, 35:81424-1428;

Mohammed, K., Nolan, M. B., Rajjo, T., Shah, N. D., Prokop, L. J., Varkey, P., & Murad, M. H. (2016). Creating a patient-centered health care delivery system: a systematic review of health care quality from the patient perspective. *American Journal of Medical Quality*, 31(1), 12-21.

Carman, K. Dardess, P, Maurer, M, Sofaer, S, Adams, K, Bechtel, C. & Sweeney, J. (2013) Patient and family engagement: A framework for understanding the elements and developing interventions and policies. *Health Affairs*. 32(2). 223-231.

The ability to communicate is important in providing and receiving health care. Segments of the population who seek health care services experience challenges in their ability to communicate with caregivers. Some patients are deaf or hard of hearing, others may have limited English proficiency and still others may have challenges with health literacy. Health literacy is the ability of patients to understand basic health information so they can make decisions about their care. Health literacy, patient safety and informed consent, as well as customer service, all contribute to the importance of being able to communicate to ensure a positive health care experience for all people.

There are several pieces of legislation that help organizations meet the communication needs of people. The American Disabilities Act provides guidance on providing sign language interpreters for deaf & hard of hearing individuals. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that “No person in the United States shall, on ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” The goal is to provide trained interpreters so facilitate communication between providers and patients and their families. Interpretation can be provided in a variety of formats, face to face, telephone and video.

Resources & Links

[USDHHS, Office of Civil Rights](#)

[Northeast Deaf & Hard of Hearing](#)

[Granite State Independent Living](#)

[Health Literacy Assessment](#)

[CDC Gateway to Health Communication](#)

[24 Languages Project](#)

[Southern NH AHEC Interpretation Training Programs](#)

[I SPEAK Cards](#)

[Language Assistance Planning and Self-Assessment Tool](#)

[Resource List of Communication Access Service Providers](#)

Action Steps

Develop a Communication Access Plan and use it to determine what information should be translated into languages commonly found in your community.

Post signs in public places that informs people of the availability of interpreters at no cost to patients.

Adopt policies that require trained interpreters.

Assess your patients for health literacy.

References

Olson, A. M., & Swabey, L. (2017). Communication access for deaf people in healthcare settings: Understanding the work of American Sign Language interpreters. *Journal for Healthcare Quality*, 39(4), 191-199.

Schwei, R. J., Del Pozo, S., Agger-Gupta, N., Alvarado-Little, W., Bagchi, A., Chen, A. H., ... & Jacobs, E. A. (2016). Changes in research on language barriers in health care since 2003: a cross-sectional review study. *International journal of nursing studies*, 54, 36-44.

What does it mean to be culturally competent?

Culture envelopes and surrounds us. Culture includes elements that we can see, such as age, gender, race, religious traditions, and style of dress. It also includes the influences that are unseen, such as education, socioeconomic status, beliefs about personal space, thoughts about time, and many others. Culture competence is about building skills that promote the understanding and value of different cultures.

It is about opening our eyes to similarities and acknowledging and appreciating differences. Respect and trust are two building blocks to cultural competency. Without being conscious of it, staff in all kinds of workplaces interact in cross cultural communications on a daily basis. Cultural competence is an important skill for staff to be able to provide quality interactions to patients, clients, and/or customers.

Resources & Links

[Cultural Iceberg activity](#)

[PBS: Me, My Race and I](#)

[American Speech Language and Hearing Association \(ASHA\) Self Assessment](#)

[NCBI Tools for Assessing Cultural Competency](#)

[National Center for Cultural Competency](#)

[National LGBT Health Education Center](#)

[DiversityRx](#)

[HRSA: Culture, Language and Health Literacy](#)

[Southern NH AHEC Cultural Competency Training](#)

[NH Cultural Competency Trainers Circle](#)

Action Steps

Encourage staff to reflect on their own cultural competence.

Provide support and training to staff engaged in their own cultural competency journey

Promote an environment that promotes cultural desire, the interest in learning about diverse cultures.

References

Caminha-Bacote, J., (1999) A model and instrument for addressing cultural competence in health care, *Journal of Nursing Education*. 38(5) 203-207.

Beach, M.C., Price, E.G., Gary, T.L., Robinson, K.A., Gozu, A., Palacio, A, Smarth, C, Jenckes, M.W., Feuerstein, C., Bass, E.B, Powe, N.R., & Cooper, L.A. (2005) Cultural competency: a systematic review of health care provider educational interventions. *Medical Care*. 43(4) 356-373.

Betancourt, J. R., Green, A. R., Carrillo, J. E., & Owusu Ananeh-Firempong, I. I. (2016). Defining cultural competence: a practical framework for addressing racial/ethnic disparities in health and health care. *Public health reports*.

The workplace brings together people from various backgrounds to perform job functions. To be culturally effective, organizations must pay attention to the diversity of their staff. Aspects of diversity include race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, age, education, religion, and physical and mental ability. The benefits of workforce diversity include improved productivity, increased creativity and the ability to listen to broader perspectives. It can be challenging to manage people with different cultural backgrounds. For example, how do we meet the needs of older workers and those of the new generation?

Employees should be recruited and retained to contribute meaningfully to the mission of the organization. Organizations can develop intentional plans to assure that all members of the workforce feel welcomed and supported in their work, and have equitable career advancement opportunities. The commitment to workforce diversity and inclusion is framed by organizational leaders and is implemented using policies and procedures. Training and education and cultural interviews can help enhance organizational culture to promote workforce diversity and inclusion.

Resources & Links

One Size Does Not Fit All: Meeting the HealthCare Needs of Diverse Populations

Workforce Diversity: A Key to Improve Productivity

Good Jobs Good Health: Diversifying the Workforce through Policy and Practice

Strategies for Diversifying Your Healthcare Workforce: A Tool for Healthcare Providers

Strengthening New Hampshire's Health Care Workforce: Strategies for Employers and Workforce Development Leaders

Best Practices in Achieving Workforce Diversity

HR Toolkit

Achieving Health Equity through Nursing Workforce Diversity

Creating! Welcoming! Places! Workbook

Society for Human Resource Management

AAMC Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan: Tools and Templates:

Nine Essential Tasks – AAMC Diversity Strategic Planning

Diversity Inclusion Toolkit

Action Steps

Expand traditional recruitment efforts by including opportunities to reach diverse populations, such as posting open positions on the NH Health & Equity Partnership Electronic Mailing List (www.equitynh.org)

Create a welcoming organizational culture.

Develop retention strategies that promote career ladders within your organization.

Become self-aware by reflecting on your own culture, identity, biases, and stereotypes

References

Mujtaba, B. (2010). Workforce diversity management: Challenges, competencies and strategies.