

Maryland School Mental Health Alliance*

Cultural Competence Information for School Clinicians

Definition

Culturally competent clinicians are knowledgeable in understanding, approaching, and treating the problems of culturally diverse groups. They have an awareness of the assumptions and values they hold that influence their work with clients and are able to provide effective services that are respectful of one's race, ethnicity, social class, religion or faith, and sexual orientation.

Why Do We Care?

Clinicians who are culturally competent are able to provide more effective services by providing accurate diagnoses and identifying appropriate treatment approaches. Culture and social status have a significant impact on beliefs and attitudes on child development, parenting, risk processes, development of interventions, and the effectiveness of those interventions. Research indicates that when clinicians are culturally competent their clients are less likely to drop out of treatment and are more satisfied with the services that are provided.

What Can We Do About It?

- Recognize the cultural diversity and uniqueness of individuals and learn as much as you can about your client's cultural background.
- Recognize that socioeconomic and political factors have a significant impact on the psychosocial functioning of culturally and ethnically diverse groups.
- Recognize the diversity that exists within minority groups.
- Identify the variations in patterns of help-seeking with individuals and families within your community.
- Develop an awareness of your own culture and acknowledge differences in the worldviews between you and your clients.
- Utilize the cultural strengths of your clients and their families when establishing treatment goals.
- Ensure that your office communicates a sense of acceptance and is welcoming to diverse groups (e.g. posters and pamphlets that are representative of a variety of ethnic groups).
- Identify traditions related to gender and age in your client's culture of origin.
- Recognize the role of acculturation (degree to which a person adopts the cultural norms of the dominant society) and enculturation (process of retaining the beliefs, values, and cultural norms of one's indigenous culture) in your clients and their extended family.
- Conduct an assessment of your multicultural competence (see list of tools below).
- Promote tolerance and understanding of cultural differences.

Helpful Websites and Resources:

The **Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice** provides reference guides that discuss research, service delivery, and national organizations that are engaged in work related to cultural competence.

<http://cecp.air.org/cultural>

Center for Immigrant Health

The Center offers a cultural competence curriculum, trainings, research on best practices, and reviews of evaluation tools to assess cultural competence. <http://www.med.nyu.edu/cih/cultural/index.html>

Child Welfare League of America provides consultation and training on cultural competence, and provides a list of suggested readings on their website. <http://www.cwla.org/programs/culture/default.htm>

Competency: A Practical Guide for Mental Health Services Providers provides clinicians the opportunity to understand the various factors which impact counseling and gives suggestions on how to enhance services for ethnically diverse clients. This guide was developed by Delia Saldana, PhD of the Hogg Foundation of Mental Health at the University of Texas at Austin.
<http://www.hogg.utexas.edu/PDF/Saldana.pdf>

Diversity Rx promote language and cultural competency to improve the quality of health care and provide several resources, including information on strategies for clinical cultural assessment, and information about videos that can be used as training tools to enhance cross-cultural communication.
<http://www.diversityrx.org>

The **Early Childhood Research Institute on Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services** engage in research, training, and dissemination on practices that are sensitive to children from culturally and linguistically diverse families. <http://clas.uiuc.edu/index.html>

The **National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC)** provides technical assistance, consultation, training, and resources on cultural competence, including tools for self-assessment.
<http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/>

Office of Minority Health Resource Center

Provides a vast amount of information including cross-cultural documents, publications, audiovisual aids, organizations, programs, and funding opportunities.
<http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=1&lvlID=3>

UCLA Center for School Mental Health in Schools provide a packet of information that focuses on cultural concerns in addressing barriers to learning.
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/cultural/culture.pdf>

Resources for practitioners to assess multicultural competence:

Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory – Revised (CCCI-R): LaFramboise, T.D., Coleman, H.L.K., & Hernandez, A. (1991). Development and factor structure of the Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory-Revised. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 22, 380-388.

Multicultural Awareness/Knowledge/Skills Survey (MAKSS): D'Andrea, M., Daniels, J., & Hecks, R. (1991). Evaluating the impact of multicultural counseling training. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 70, 143-150.

Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI): Sadowsky, G.R., Taffe, R.C., Gutkin, T.B., & Wise, S.L. (1994). Development of the Multicultural Counseling Inventory: A self-report measure of multicultural competencies. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 41, 137-148.

Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale – Form B (MCAS-B): Ponterotto, J.G., Reiger, B.P., Barrett, A., Sparks, R., Sanchez, C.M., & Magids, D. (1996). Development and initial validation of the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale. In G.R. Sadowsky & J.C. Impara (Eds.), *Multicultural assessment in counseling and clinical psychology* (pp. 247-282). Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.

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