

# Cultural Competence

## Fact Sheet for the Coordinated Children's Services Initiative

### The State of New York Coordinated Children's Services Initiative

Tier III, the statewide level of CCSI, is made up of:

Family Representatives

New York State

Office of Mental Health (OMH)

New York State

Education Department (SED)

New York State

Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)

New York State

Council on Children and Families (CCF)

New York State

Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA)

New York State

Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS)

New York State

Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD)

New York State

Department of Health (DOH)

### NYS Office of Mental Health

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Sharon E. Carpinello, RN, PhD  
Acting Commissioner

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Cultural Competence Coordinator

## What is Cultural Competence?

A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. (Cross et al., 1989)

Cultural competence is:

- Effective and respectful care that is compatible with the cultural health and mental health beliefs, practices and languages of the youth and families receiving services.
- Respect for and attention to patterns of help seeking, childrearing, family roles and spiritual practices.
- Increasing access to treatment and supportive services
- Providing cultural adaptation of services
- Promoting equity in service benefit

Cultural competence is an ongoing process to assure quality treatment and services are available and effective for all populations of New York State.

## Why is Cultural Competence Important?

"...culture bears upon whether people even seek help in the first place, what types of help they seek, what coping styles and social supports they have and how much stigma they attach to mental illness." (DHHS, 2001)

## Barriers to Coordinated and Effective Care

- Disparities exist
- Less access to services due to location and/or finances
- Less availability of quality services
- Language differences
- Stigma
- Mistrust
- Discriminatory practices
- Family, community and agency value differences
- Lack of communication about available services, effective treatment and individual rights
- Lack of systematic coordination for youth and families with multiple needs

**CULTURAL COMPETENCE IS BEST PRACTICE**

## What are Cultural Considerations?

While ethnicity, age, gender, language and spiritual practices are primary considerations it is also important to acknowledge the impact of English proficiency, literacy levels, geographic location, sexual orientation, education, employment, income, country of origin, immigration status, physical limitations or disabilities and criminal justice involvement.

## What Do Teams and Counties Need To Do?

- Develop and implement a written strategic plan to articulate team/county cultural competence efforts.
- Know and understand the various cultural groups present in the community.
- Determine future directions for program development based upon consumer satisfaction.
- Recruit and involve a diverse membership from organizations that are representative of the diversity in the community.
- Assure bilingual and bicultural team members are part of the workforce.
- Include ongoing training and education about culturally relevant service provision.
- Provide language assistance services including trained interpreters to children and families who have limited English language proficiency.
- Provide access to translated materials including information about rights, grievances and available services.
- Promote ongoing development of cultural competence skills for Tier I and Tier II members.
- Integrate cultural competence throughout CCSI initiatives.
- Consider new methods and media for service information exchange and recovery education.
- Develop partnerships with community leaders, “cultural brokers” and natural networks to facilitate improved service access and to provide feedback that will guide agency direction.
- Examine agency and individual outcomes to determine program effectiveness across cultures and across systems.

## Commitment to Cultural Competence Can...

- Keep the focus on understanding and valuing difference.
- Improve access to services for underserved populations.
- Keep services youth and family centered.
- Focus service design to meet the needs of cultural groups, neighborhoods and communities.
- Guide service development that is not in conflict with the norms and values of youth and families.
- Enhance and improve service quality.

## For additional information and assistance about CCSI, contact:

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