



Children's Mental Health Matters!

Facts for Families Cultural Competence

Definition

A culturally competent clinician is 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 their client's race, ethnicity, social class, religion or faith, and sexual orientation.

Why Do We Care?

The cultural differences that exist between patient and therapist are often numerous (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, educational level, religion and language). Clinicians who are culturally competent are able to provide more effective services by providing accurate diagnoses and identifying appropriate treatment approaches. 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?

When seeking mental health services for your children or yourself, consider:

- ✎ Does the professional have experience working with someone of your race, ethnicity, religion and/or sexual orientation?
- ✎ Is the professional sensitive to your cultural differences and does he/she demonstrate an awareness of your cultural norms?
- ✎ Does the professional have an appreciation for learning more about your culture?
- ✎ Does the professional respect your beliefs and values?
- ✎ Has your culture been taken into account in the development of the plans and goals for treatment?
- ✎ Do you and your children feel accepted and valued by the professional?

Resources/Links

The CMHS Mental Health Services Locator website provides comprehensive information about mental health services and resources. You can find treatment facilities and support services, as well as consumer, family, and advocacy organizations. <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases/>

Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity
A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General. Documents the disparities in access, quality and availability of mental health services for ethnic minorities and proposes recommendations for improvement. <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/cre/sma-01-3613.pdf>

National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care: A Final Report, published by The Office of Minority Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Outlines standards that should be implemented in organizations to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate services for ethnic minorities, which can aid in the elimination of disparities in health care. <http://www.omhrc.gov/assets/pdf/checked/finalreport.pdf>

The New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Subcommittee on Cultural Competence — report addressing disparities in health care, the role of culture in service delivery, and making several policy recommendations for improving the health care system. http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/subcommittee/CulturalCompetence_013103.doc

What is Cultural Competency? U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—The Office of Minority Health. <http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlID=11>

**Adapted from Resources found on:
www.schoolmentalhealth.org March 2009**