

Managing Diversity At Duke: A Toolkit for Managers

Toolkit 2: Cultural Competency

Purpose of Cultural Competency:

Cultural competence is an experiential understanding and acceptance of the beliefs, values, and ethics of others as well as the demonstrated skills necessary to work with and serve diverse individuals and groups. This involves an experiential understanding, awareness, and respect for the beliefs, values, and ethics of other cultures and the cross-cultural skills necessary for delivering services and working with diverse individuals and groups.

Do's:

- Do recognize that cultural competence is a developmental process for both individuals and organizations.
- Do commit to building awareness, knowledge and skills related to cross cultural teamwork and communication over an extended period of time. This is not a one day workshop.
- Do remember that people and work systems develop the capacity for being reflective and adapting new work styles.
- Do know that both individuals and organizations are at various levels of awareness, knowledge and skills along the cultural competence continuum. (adapted from Cross et al., 1989)

Don'ts:

- Do not assume that only employees with direct patient care benefit from cultural competency skills and awareness. All employees at Duke would benefit from better understanding the diverse students, faculty, patients, staff, visitors, and researchers who make up the Duke community.
- Do not try to evolve a formula for working with different groups. Although you can develop awareness about ethnic or religious or gendered or generational groups, do not assume that everyone within that group will fit into a formula. People are ultimately individuals and appreciate being treated that way.
- Do not forget about elements of diversity that can be overlooked: sexual orientation, region, country of origin, and generation are also elements that impact communication, marketing, educational styles, and safety for some of the different groups you come into contact with at your job.

What are the measures of a Culturally Competent organization?

- A defined set of values and principles, and demonstrated behaviors, attitudes and structures that enable employees and leaders to work effectively cross-culturally.
- Demonstrated capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics of difference, (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and (5) adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve.
- Incorporate the above in all aspects of policy making, administration, practice, service delivery and involve systematically consumers, key stakeholders and communities.

Where does the concept of Cultural Competency come from?

Historically, professional organizations in fields such as health care and psychology led the way to institutions and professions examining their need to be more effective working with diverse patient and client populations. In the last ten years, the ideals and tools of cultural competency are becoming more mainstreamed into other professions. As many educational, social, and governmental institutions experience shifting demographics, generational differences, and an emerging out gay and lesbian workforce, organizations are identifying tools and best practices for supporting employees and customers to bridge cultural gaps.

What are the fundamental components of individual cultural competency?

1. Self awareness: cultural lenses, bias, style preferences.
2. Recognition of the impact that each of our cultural lenses has on our job role, communication style, and perceptions.
3. Commitment to learn more about target populations of interest.
4. Development of skills for cross cultural communication, evaluation and feedback on skills integrated into professional development.

What are the fundamental components of organizational cultural competency?

1. Clearly articulated vision by senior leaders regarding the importance of diversity and inclusion to the business of the organization.
2. Climate survey: assess the degree to which individuals and members of groups perceive they are valued, rewarded, and have opportunities for growth.
3. On going education, mentoring, and evaluation throughout the organization for employees and managers to understand the expectations and skills necessary for developing a culturally competent organization.
4. Expectations and success linked to performance management and evaluation systems in order to promote accountability.

Scenario: Quality Patient Care (from *Worlds Apart, A Four-Part Series on Cross-Cultural Healthcare* By Maren Grainger-Monsen, MD, and Julia Haslett, Stanford University Center for Biomedical Ethics).

Justine Chitsena, a 4-year-old from Laos, has an atrial septal defect (a hole in the muscle wall of her heart) which her doctors feel should be repaired by surgery. Her mother is considering the operation but her grandmother is opposed. They are part of an ethnic minority in Southeast Asia called the Khmu, and have strong cultural beliefs and traditional healing practices as well as mistrust of Western medicine that give rise to this conflict.

Process Points

- Justine's mother has assimilated more into the customs and values of the USA as evidenced by her willingness to pursue the surgery. Justine's Grandmother is more traditional, and greatly invested in the customs of her homeland and culture.
- Given the strong role Justine's Grandmother plays in the family and the degree to which the mother relies on her mother to care for Justine, it would be important to better understand the specific concerns of the grandmother.
- Meeting with the mother and grandmother and trying to understand their perspectives will help this intervention to be as effective as possible.

- For more information about this scenarios, visit the website for **Worlds Apart**, a cultural competency training video for healthcare practitioners:
http://www.fanlight.com/catalog/films/912_wa.shtml

Scenario: Effective Working Relationships

Georgina Thomas is a 54 year old African American woman working in a department for the last 16 years. Georgina is upset that a recently hired young man, Morgan, in the department is gay. He even has a photo of himself and his partner at their commitment ceremony on his desk. Georgina is having trouble focusing on her work as she has strong religious beliefs about sexuality. Morgan is offended that Georgina has a problem; the two of them have not been able to work productively together.

Process Points: Effective Working Relationships

- Duke University's non discrimination policy includes the protection of gay and lesbian employees. Morgan has a right to come to work and feel safe.
- Georgina has a right to her strong religious beliefs and also must respect that some of her colleagues, customers, and patients may not be heterosexual.
- Neither employee should harass or threaten the other with their views.
- The manager's responsibility in this situation is to communicate clear expectations for behavior and to ensure each employee is acting respectful towards the other.
- For more information on LGBT concerns in the workplace: www.outandequal.org

Summary: Cultural Competence is...

1. A defined set of values and principles, and demonstrated behaviors, attitudes and structures that enable employees and leaders to work effectively cross-culturally.
2. Demonstrated capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics of difference, (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and (5) adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve.
3. Incorporate the above in all aspects of policy making, administration, practice, service delivery and involve systematically consumers, key stakeholders and communities.

Links and Other Resources:

Medical Education

Promoting, Reinforcing and Improving Medical Education Culture and Diversity Curriculum
<http://www.amsa.org/programs/diversitycurriculum.cfm>

Examples of how Cultural Competency is being implemented at the Health System Level:

Assuring Cultural Competence in Health Care: Recommendations for National Standards and an Outcomes-Focused Research Agenda
<http://www.omhrc.gov/clas/cultural1a.htm>

The California Endowment, "Principles and Recommended Standards for Cultural Competence Education of Health Care Professionals."
http://www.calendow.org/reference/publications/pdf/cultural/principles_standards.pdf

The California Endowment is pleased to share our publication A Manager's Guide to Cultural Competence Education for Health Care Professionals.
http://www.calendow.org/reference/publications/pdf/cultural/managers_guide.pdf