National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

JANUARY 2009
Orlando, Florida

NANCY MACIAS-SMITH, MMHS

LAUREN GILMAN, MA

AGENDA AND REFLECTIONS

This is an invitation to discuss and to reflect on Cultural and Linguistic Competence; we will review concepts, frameworks and potential for a more inclusive community for all. Then we will review and discuss some materials that have been created by grantees with a diverse target audience in mind.

GROUND RULES:

- Inclusive language
- Avoid assumptions such as general consensus on different issues
- Acknowledge all voices, opinions and experiences; each voice is important
- Create a safe space that fosters respect, empathy and security
- Take responsibility for your own feelings and opinions; use I statements
- Create a positive experience and work towards your organization's mission
- Open mindedness and respectful cultural curiosity

FROM THE FIELD:

- Having one representative from an ethnic minority group as spoke person for everyone's experience is an unfair burden to the spokesperson and provides a limited perspective
- Each experience is unique in its own cultural sense
- Anger as a consequence of limited services and resources for specific populations
- The agency encourages communication and provides protective environment that addresses bias and prejudices
- Coming as outsiders makes our day to day work difficult
- Need to understand different perspectives and beliefs that may conflict with our own and need to trust and respect client's judgment
- Explore and probe with the client to find answers that will empower her/him to assess and understand their unique experience in their terms

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CLC BASED ON ERIC J. BRUNS' WORK

"Cultural and Linguistic Competence is not a single strategy, a program or an organizational structure. It is a highly complex concept that cuts across providers, agencies, service systems, communities, and community members. Efforts of many different types may be expended at all these levels, and such efforts are interdependent and exert effects of one another. Operationalizing cultural and linguistic competence is not an endeavor that lends itself to a linear approach or to telling a story that has a beginning, middle and end. (Bruns, 2007)
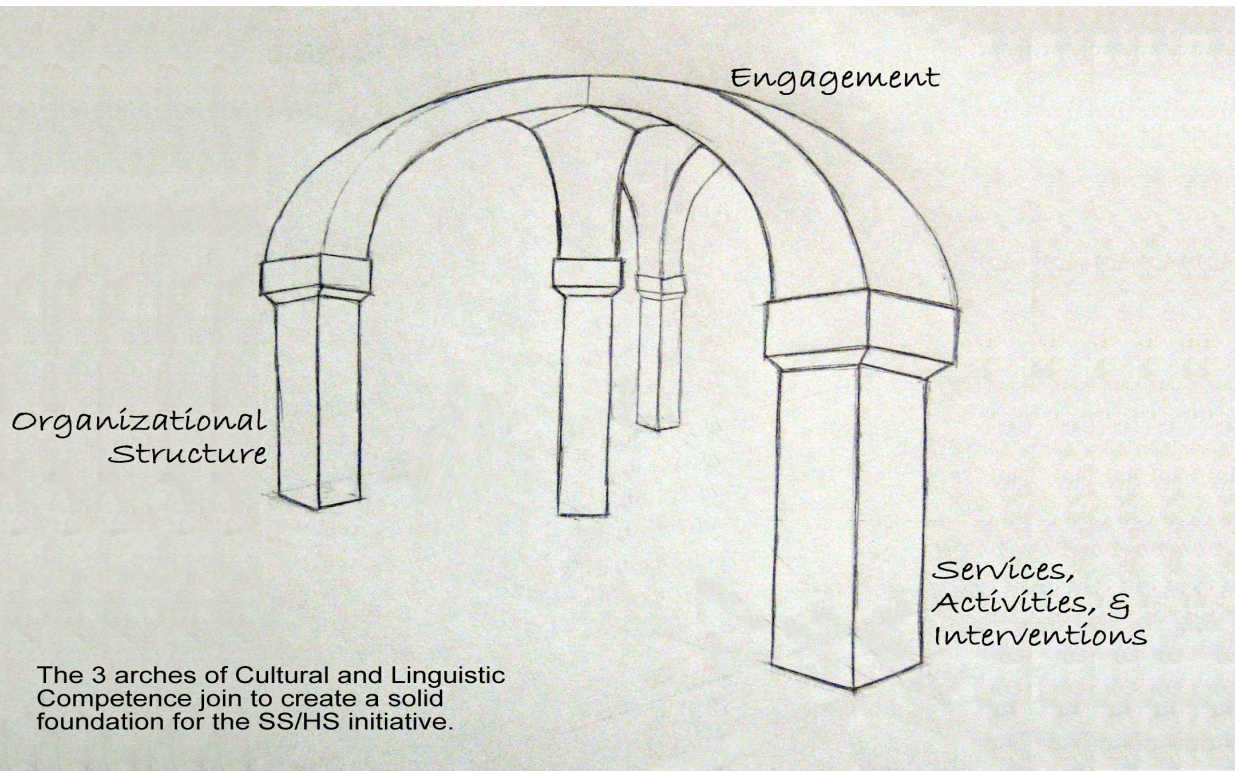
WORKING DEFINITION(S)

- The ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, races, ethnics backgrounds, sexual orientations, and faiths or religions in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the work of individuals, families, tribes, and communities and protects the dignity of each. (Malik & Velazquez, 2002)

WORKING DEFINITION

- Cultural competence: A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together as a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. The word "culture" is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group. The word competence is used because it implies having a capacity to function effectively

- http://www.aafp.org/fpm/20001000/58cult.html#boxb

OUR CONCEPT OF CLC

The 3 Arches of CLC

Engagement

Organizational Structure

Services, Activities, & Interventions

The 3 arches of Cultural and Linguistic Competence join to create a solid foundation for the SS/HS initiative.

ORGANIZATIONAL

- **Recruitment and Retention** – An organization commitment to CLC is reflected in its policies and procedures for the recruitment of diverse staff. This includes procedures outlining how to advertise for open staff positions through a variety of media including non-English. Changing community demographics necessitates this.

- **Capacity Building** – Service providers must enhance their capacity to work with linguistic minorities and other underserved populations. Organization must ensure ongoing, high quality professional development that can begin with a CLC self and/or organizational assessment. Professional development should also include specific topics as well as skill-building activities to foster cultural awareness among staff. Common topics include but are not limited to:
    - Cultural histories
    - Mental health constructs
    - Nonverbal cues
    - Diversity within and between groups
    - Experiences of racism
    - Dynamics of immigration and refugee status
    - Issues related to economic diversity and poverty
    - Single parent families
    - Education levels
    - Limited support networks

ORGANIZATIONAL CON'T.

- **Leadership** – Leaders set the tone regarding the importance of CLC and model when and how to consider issues of diversity. Leaders can address resistance to CLC issues through cultivating relationships with allies who may be able to influence others to recognize and respond to diversity issues.

- **Planning** – A process should be created for an inclusive, grass-roots approach to help ensure that SS/HS plans are reflective and responsive to a variety of groups and perspectives present in a community.

- **Budget** – Budget items that reinforce a culturally competent organizational structure included funds for professional development, language services such as translation or program materials or the use of interpreters, and communication strategies to reach diverse audiences.

- **Review** – As the Initiative's work progresses, a regular review of policies and procedures can ensure alignment with the changing needs of the community.

ENGAGEMENT

<u>Outreach</u>

- Effective outreach strategies target intended audiences in an appropriate manner with messages that are meaningful and relevant
- All communication should take into account educational and literacy levels of the audience as well as the language spoken
- *Matching the medium to the message and the strategy to the intended recipient, is key to successful communication outreach.*

<u>Involvement</u>

- Students, family members and community stakeholders must feel valued and welcome and that their cultural needs are being met.
- Strategies and tools may be effective with mainstream populations, but may need to be adjusted to accommodate the populations being served (e.g. family structure, schedules, language, etc.).
- Support mechanisms should be in place that will enable parents to attend events (transportation, childcare, etc.) and that encourage children and families to access the services that they need.
- Cultural organizations can play and important role since they have already established a level of trust with their communities.

<u>Empowerment</u>

- Diverse stakeholders must become agents of change and be an integral part of the system
- Leadership skills should be cultivated within the diverse stakeholder group
- A Youth Development model should be considered to empower and engage them in process that contributes to their school and community
- Staff members from underrepresented groups should have the training and support to alleviate feelings of isolation
- Leaders should mirror the community being served so that children understand that change is possible and that they too can become leaders

SERVICES

- **<u>Assessment</u>:** A need assessments can provide critical information
- **Adaptations:** The effectiveness of an EBI may be enhanced by adaptations to meet the needs of a diverse audience (translation into other languages, culturally appropriate and accurate translations, literacy levels, etc.)
- **<u>Access and Availability</u>:** Service access and availability should include: transportation, flexible operating hours, sliding fee schedule, services offered in a number of languages, with translation and interpreter services
- **<u>Relationships with competent community providers</u>:** Enlist clinicians and other providers who have the capacity to provide culturally and linguistically competent services; services should be effective, respectful and compatible with stakeholders cultural beliefs and language preference
- **<u>Evaluation</u>:** Regular review of evaluation data can help identify if service are being used at the expected rates and whether they are culturally and linguistically effective. If they are not, an adjustment should be made according to need.

LEADERSHIP FOR CLC

- Leadership involved
- Clear policies and procedures
- Collaborate w/ natural helpers
- Training and education for all
- Clinical practices that are respectful and congruent with families and communities' values and beliefs
- Materials, resources, tools and strategies that mirror the community
- Overall planning and implementation must have on going and meaningful revisions

ASSESSING YOUR ORGANIZATION

- How inclusive of diversity is the decision making process?

- How do policies reflect cultural differences?

- How does the organization value cultural differences?

- Is there a process of employment equity?

- Does the organization provide access and relevant services to targeted groups?

RESEARCH IS TELLING US THAT:

- Statistics indicate that 25 % of the United States population was classified as "minority"

- by 2050, it is predicted that more than half of the United States population will be from non-European backgrounds (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2001)

- The impact of this rapid growth in racial and cultural diversity will influence mental health in these ways:

RESEARCH IS TELLING US THAT:

- Unique and different perception of mental illness and mental health (Sue & Sue, 1990)

- Need to adapt to new ways such as help-seeking practices and resources

- Increased need to find and to provide credible services and CLC providers

- The rapid growth of the ethnic minority population will not be matched by a growth in the number of mental health providers who represent these diverse groups (Kruse & Canning, 2002)

RISKS:

When culture is ignored, the services provided will be negatively affected. We will find:

- Unnecessary Out of Home placements and more restrictive settings
- Cultural bias in diagnostic and assessment procedures
- Professionals who are well intentioned, but lack training in working with culturally diverse populations

PROBLEM SOLVING:

- How can we express ideas about issues such as different practices that can be communicated culturally while still being respectful of that culture?

- How can we effectively deal with colleagues that are not culturally sensitive?

- How can we be accountable to include CLC in our organization?

- What message can we foster that states that generalizations and assumptions are unsafe even between shared background and shared ethnic groups.

- How do we ask questions openly about a person's culture as opposed to skirting the issue?

A NECESSARY JOURNEY

CLC is a necessary journey that we start with our personal reflection, where we review our values and beliefs and consciously decide to open our minds. We can un-learn bias and prejudices and can make changes in systems that oppress the more vulnerable of all: our children and families that are living in poverty, that are different than us and subjugated by it and we can be humble and learn, it is our responsibility. (Nancy Macias-Smith, 2008)

QUESTIONS

Your Turn:

- What did you do?

- Who was your audience?

- What was the objective?

- How did you deliver it?

- Did it work as well as you wanted it to?
  - Why/Why not?