THE CULTURAL PROFICIENCY FRAMEWORK

Cultural Proficiency is the policies and practices in an organization or the values and behavior of an individual, that enable the person or institution to engage effectively with people and groups who are different from them. Cultural Proficiency is an inside-out approach that influences how people relate to their colleagues, clients and community. The Framework has four Components.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Principles are the foundational values on which the framework is built

- Culture is a predominant force
- People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture
- There is diversity within and between cultures
- Every group has culturally-defined needs
- People have personal identities and group identities.
- Marginalized populations have to be at least bicultural
- Families, as defined by culture, are the primary systems of support
- The diverse thought patterns of cultural groups influence how problems are defined and solved.

CULTURAL PROFICIENCY CONTINUUM

The Continuum provides language for describing situations and events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESTRUCTION</th>
<th>INTOLERANCE</th>
<th>REDUCTIONISM</th>
<th>PRECOMPETENCE</th>
<th>COMPETENCE</th>
<th>PROFICIENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate differences</td>
<td>Demean differences</td>
<td>Discount differences</td>
<td>Embrace differences Begin to make changes, some of which may be inadequate, or incorrect because of limited understanding.</td>
<td>Engage with differences Use the essential elements as standards for individual behavior and organizational practices</td>
<td>Esteem and learn from differences Interact equitably in a variety of cultural environments; advocate for others.</td>
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<td>Judge differences among people as wrong and seek to eliminate them.</td>
<td>Accept that differences exist, but regard some as superior to others.</td>
<td>Act as if there are no differences. Treat everyone equally, regardless of their differences.</td>
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THE BARRIERS TO CULTURAL PROFICIENCY

Systems and attitudes that undermine the principles are Barriers

- Unawareness of the need to adapt
- Resistance to change
- Systems of oppression and privilege
- A sense of entitlement

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

The Elements provide standards for planning and evaluating.
- **Assess Culture:** Identify and the groups present in the system and the norms and expectations of the cultural environment
- **Value Diversity:** Demonstrate an appreciation for the differences among and between groups
- **Manage the Dynamics of Difference:** Respond appropriately and effectively to the issues that arise in a diverse environment
- **Adapt to Diversity:** Change policies and adopt new behaviors and practices that eliminate inequities
- **Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge:** Drive the changes into the systems of the organization and advocate for those who may not have access to the privileges of the dominant groups.