

LASSEN COUNTY CULTURAL COMPETENCY NEWSLETTER



Volume 1 / Issue 12

PURPOSE:

To reduce and eliminate cultural disparity by improving access to culturally and linguistically sensitive competent mental health and SUD services.

GOALS:

- Continuous assessment of service needs throughout the community
- Development and implementation of strategies to reduce disparities
- Training for professionals and community members
- Stigma reduction and promotion of culturally appropriate services

Cultural competence, in brief, is the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures. This ability depends on awareness of one's own cultural worldview, knowledge of other cultural practices and worldviews, tolerant attitudes towards cultural differences, and cross-cultural skills.

WELCOME!

One of the key objectives of the Cultural Competence Committee is to bring awareness of the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards. CLAS Standards were developed by the US Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health. The CLAS Standards represent a path to correcting current inequities in the provision of healthcare services and to making those services more responsive to the needs of individuals of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

We will highlight a CLAS standard in each issue of the Cultural Competence Newsletter.

CLAS Standard 5 - Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services.

Simply providing language assistance services is not enough to ensuring that the individuals seeking care and services receive responsive, effective communication. Many individuals seeking care and services from an organization never know that communication and language assistance services are available at no cost to them.

An organization should also be sure to notify individuals that such services are available, and that they are available free of cost to them. This notification not only helps individuals better utilize services, but also helps them learn to be more informed consumers of health care. Then they are able to move through the health care system more efficiently.

In addition, notification of communication and language assistance services empowers individuals to take advantage of quality communication and language assistance services. This puts your organization in a better position to avoid legal ramifications from misinterpretation between provider and patient, which could potentially lead to malpractice and legal action against your organization.

Lastly, it is important to recognize that when others in the community learn of communication and language assistance services provided by your organization, your organization will need to be prepared for increasing numbers of individuals entering the organization and requesting those services.

*The next meeting of the Lassen County Cultural Competence Committee will
be December 4, 2018*

Community Spotlight

Personal reflections on Cultural Competency

MEET DR. HALL!

Cultural Competency by Dr. Marlon Hall, President of Lassen Community College

- What is Cultural Competency? Why is it important? The awareness of people that are different than you. It is important in creating a cross cultural understanding and acceptance. We need to understand each other's cultural backgrounds to make sense of different viewpoints and opinions. Get rid of stereotypes, get rid of inappropriate words used to describe people that are different from you. There will always be cultural difference, language barriers, and culture shock or living in any small rural town
- What is culture?
 - Customary beliefs
 - Social forms
 - Material traits of a racial, religious or social group
 - The characteristic features of everyday existence
- Culture makes up a large part of our day to day life. Differences include differences in food, clothes, religion, and language-For example, the different ways different cultures drink tea (American-Iced Tea, English-Hot tea, Chinese Tea-hot with ingredients) Small differences.
 - Like the way each culture drinks tea can be difficult to get used to at first because these things are so important to day-to-day living.
 - There are many things of culture that are not visible, small things that are just the tip of the iceberg, they are only things we can see on the surface. They include: work ethic, importance of time, religious beliefs, values, nature of friendships. These differences are not visible, they are difficult to communicate and understand. The parts of the culture we cannot see are very important because they serve as a foundation for things that we see.
- Examples of cultural differences ("come here" with your index finger pointed upward in American to "come here" in the Philippines, laughing in America, as opposed to laughing in the Philippines when you slip and fall as a sign to help you with the embarrassment.
- How can you be culturally aware?
 - Engage with other people's cultures by asking questions.
 - Be open! Don't get in the habit of thinking your way is the only way of doing something- how is it done in another country?
 - Think about what you can learn from other people and what you can teach them.
 - Invite others to share their culture with you
 - Be open minded, ask questions, if you don't understand.
- Language Barriers
 - For most English language learners or for others where English is a second language, students will worry if their English will be good enough.
 - Use simple words when communicating with others to understand fully. Simplifying your language is not easy, it takes time and practice.
 - Simplifying your language when appropriate will help others understand, which will in turn increase their confidence speaking English.



- How: use simple words, speak slowly and clearly as possible, stress important words, repeat yourself if necessary.
- If an individual keeps making the same mistake correct them in a positive way. They want to improve their English and they will not mind being corrected.
- Misunderstandings: *"I hear what you say" British- "I disagree and do not want to discuss it further." Others- He accepts your point of view. "With the greatest respect, British-I think you are an idiot, Others- He is listening to me."*
- What is Culture Shock?
 1. A condition of disorientation affecting someone who is suddenly exposed to an unfamiliar culture or way of life or set of attitudes(Coalinga, California or Susanville, California vs. San Francisco or Los Angeles)
 2. People develop homesickness because they are isolated and lack an immediate support system.
 3. Causes: Cultural differences, climate, rules of behavior, absence of people who look like you, language, food (tri-tip), social roles.
 4. Symptoms: bored, withdrawal, homesickness, excessive sleeping, irrational anger, mischievous pranks or getting into trouble.
 5. If someone is suffering culture shock: encourage them to get involved in community activities, give support, and if necessary direct them to the appropriate assistance.

Dr. Hall is the Superintendent and President of Lassen Community College.

DECEMBER AWARENESS

Christmas is celebrated in many different countries in many different ways. However, not all countries celebrate Christmas. Other holidays celebrated around the world include Hanukkah, New Year's, Kwanzaa, the Winter Solstice, Boxing Day and Festivus. The point is to acknowledge that different people celebrate different holidays in different ways.

Merry Christmas versus Happy Holidays

Alice E.M. Underwood (grammarly blog)

This debate isn't just about words: it's about being politically correct and inclusive of diverse beliefs and traditions across the country.

"Holidays" are more inclusive

Although Christmas has been the most widely celebrated holiday in the United States for decades, the U.S. is more diverse than it's ever been before, so not everyone celebrates Christmas. Some people get a Christmas tree, but don't have any traditions associated with Christianity. And plenty of people have a different religious tradition, or no religious tradition at all.

If you say "Merry Christmas" to someone who celebrates Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or nothing at all, you could make them feel marginalized: like their own beliefs aren't valued or respected by society. And that's not a good way to feel around the holidays.

What about saying "Happy Holidays" to someone who celebrates Christmas—won't that make them feel bad, too? Unfortunately, there's a chance of that, especially because Christmas is still so widely celebrated. But one holiday being more popular than the others doesn't mean you should ignore the other ones.

Think of it this way: "Happy Holidays" includes Christmas as one of those holidays, and "Merry Christmas" leaves out everything other than Christmas.

If you live in an area with mostly Christians, or if you know someone has a Menorah and not a Christmas tree, you can generally feel safe with a "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Hanukkah." But if you don't know, or aren't quite sure, it's probably best to stay general rather than taking a guess and potentially making someone feel bad.

So, "Happy Holidays" or "Merry Christmas"?

A good rule of thumb: if you don't know what someone celebrates, use the broader term. It's as easy as that.

It's not an insult to Christmas. It's an inclusive way of wishing someone well and showing that you respect and value whatever tradition they observe. Actress and comedian Whoopi Goldberg agrees:

"'Happy Holidays' allows everybody to be included...When you're walking past somebody, you don't know what their religious beliefs are or whether they have them. If they have religious beliefs and you can't tell what they are, say 'Happy holidays.'"

Enjoy Christmas Day, or as they say in:

French	Noël
German	Weihnachten
Norwegian	Første juledag
Spanish	Navidad
Portuguese	Natal
Italian	Natale
Danish	Juledag
Dutch	Eerste kerstdag



Hanukah is a Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire

DECEMBER AWARENESS CALENDAR

December 1	World Aids Day
December 5	International Volunteer Day
December 7	Pearl Harbor Remembrance
December 13	U.S. National Guard Birthday 1636
December 25	Christmas Day
December 31	New Year's Eve
December 2 - 10	Hanukkah
December 26 – January 1	Kwanzaa



Kwanzaa is an African American holiday which celebrates family, community and culture.

What holiday or tradition do you celebrate that represents your culture?
Let us know!

Know someone who should be recognized for their advocacy efforts? Is there a program or project that you are aware of that we could highlight for you or your Agency? Is there a Cultural Competency topic or CLAS standard you would like to see addressed?

Please submit your suggestions to craschein@co.lassen.ca.us

Lassen County Cultural Competency Committee members:

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