

# CULTURAL COMPETENCE

ALLIANCE FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

## A GUIDE TO BEING CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE

#CHANGETHELANGUAGEASAP

CULTURAL COMPETENCE COMMITTEE

2021



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## About the author

Parnia Roghani is a graduate of the University of South Florida with a Masters in Public Health. The Cultural Competence initiative was created as part of her internship with ASAP. Since then, Parnia has gone on to create a cultural competence committee in hopes of creating a community that promotes inclusivity and health equity. Parnia hopes that this guidebook will give community members some insight on how to include some of these practices in everyday life.

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## About the designer

Alecia Ortiz is a graduate of Florida State University with a Masters in Social Work. Passionate about Cultural Competence and its role in structural and institutional oppression, discrimination, social class, spirituality, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression to name a few. Alecia views this guidebook as not only an educational tool but as a tool to inspire advocacy, activism, and community-level change.



## IN THIS GUIDE:

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This guide was created to help increase cultural competency within the communities we live and work in. This guide will help you better understand cultural competency and how to apply it within your everyday life.



## EDUCATIONAL TOOL

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Use this guide as an education tool to improve your understanding of cultural competence.

## SELF-AWARENESS TOOL

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Explore our self-awareness tools and learn more about yourself!



## REFERENCE TOOL

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Use this guide as a reference tool. Refer back to specific information when needed. Tools such as our #ChangeTheLanguage, common terms, stages and continuum are easy-to-use reference tools.

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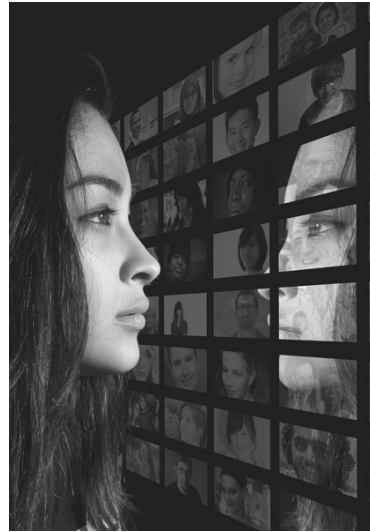
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# Common Terms

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Understand the words associated with cultural intelligence.



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## CULTURAL AWARENESS

Understanding the difference between one's own culture and other cultures.

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE

The ability to interact effectively with people of diverse backgrounds and different identity groups by being sensitive, appreciative, respectful, and responsive to beliefs, practices, and cultural needs that are different from your own.

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## CULTURAL HUMILITY

The understanding that you will not know or understand every different culture, but that you will take the time to continue to learn and be respectful of cultures that are not your own.

## CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Understanding the needs of your culture and the culture of others.

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## CULTURE

Having the same beliefs, thought patterns, language, practices, values and customs with a group of people. Culture is something that always changes

## DIVERSITY

Differences in cultures, abilities, ideas, philosophies, backgrounds, and histories that exist among individuals.

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## ETHNICITY

A person's identification with a group based on characteristics such as shared history, ancestry, language, and culture.

## INCLUSION

Supporting and embracing diversity in a way that clearly shows all individuals are valued, recognized, and accepted for who they truly are. This involves demonstrating respect for the abilities, beliefs, backgrounds, and cultures of those around you and engaging those with diverse perspectives, so that others feel an unconditional sense of belonging for who they are.

# CULTURE



# ETHNICITY

Culture is the ideas, customs and social behavior of a particular people or society.

Culture can not be identified based on the appearance. It is represented mostly in material items.

Culture is socially acquired.

Culture is very dynamic, and anyone can acquire others' cultural traits.

Ethnicity is the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.

Ethnicity can be identified based on the physical appearance, beliefs, and practices.

Ethnicity is biologically inherited.

Ethnic mobility is possible if there is acceptance from both ethnic groups.

**"TO BE CULTURALLY HUMBLE MEANS THAT I AM WILLING TO LEARN."**

Joe Gallagher

# EQUITY



# EQUALITY

Equity is the quality of being fair and impartial.

Involves treating each individual according to his or her needs.

Considers individual needs of people.

Equality is the state or quality of being equal.

Involves treating every individual in the same manner, irrespective of their differences.

Does not consider needs and requirements of people.



# WHAT IS CULTURE

Culture is a broad term that can have a lot of different definitions. However, the most common definition used to define culture is:

"A pattern of behavior shared by a society, or group of people. Many different things make up a society's culture. These things include food, language, clothing, tools, music, arts, customs, beliefs, and religion."

Culture shapes how people experience their world, make decisions, and how people relate to others. It is complex and shapes our values, beliefs, and thought patterns.

It is important to remember that culture can go beyond the common definition. Religion, education, gender and socioeconomic status are all examples of someone's culture. An easy way to remember, is by using the acronym, REGARDS.

- R** RACE
- E** ETHNICITY
- G** GENDER
- A** AGE
- R** RELIGION
- D** DISABILITY
- S** SEXUALITY



# The Cultural Iceberg

## Surface Culture

Food  
Flags Festivals  
Fashion Holidays Music  
Performances Dances Games  
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

## Deep Culture

**Communication Styles and Rules**  
facial expressions gestures eye contact  
personal space touching  
body language tone of voice  
handling and displaying of emotion  
conversational patterns in different social situations

### Notions of:

courtesy and manners  
friendship leadership  
cleanliness modesty beauty

### Concepts of:

self time past and future  
fairness and justice  
roles related to age, sex, class, family, etc.

### Attitudes toward:

elders adolescents dependents  
rule expectations work authority  
cooperation vs. competition  
relationships with animals age sin death

### Approaches to:

religion courtship marriage raising children  
decision-making problem-solving

Culture is like an iceberg, we see only the tip, a relatively small portion of the iceberg in its entirety. Much of an iceberg lies beneath the surface; the same can be said for culture. On the surface we may see what someone looks like, the language they speak, or the food they eat. However, there is so much that is unseen, beneath the surface, that can describe certain behaviors. It's important to remember that these core values are hard to change as they have been passed down from generation to generation.

# WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Cultural competence is much more than awareness of cultural differences and knowledge of customs and values different than our own. It is the ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures.

Cultural competence encompasses:

- Being aware of one's own world view
- Developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences
- Gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views

- Developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures.

It is a set of attitudes, behaviors and policies that promote positive and effective interactions within diverse members of the community (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). Cultural competence means to respect and understand not only diverse cultures, but other social groups and individuals.

Cultural competence is not a goal, it is process and a way of being (Washington State Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.)

SOURCE: <http://makeitourbusiness.ca/blog/what-does-it-mean-be-culturally-competent>



**"CULTURAL COMPETENCE ARE THE PRINCIPLES OF TRUST, RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, FAIRNESS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE"**



**DIVERSITY IS  
HAVING A SEAT  
AT THE TABLE**

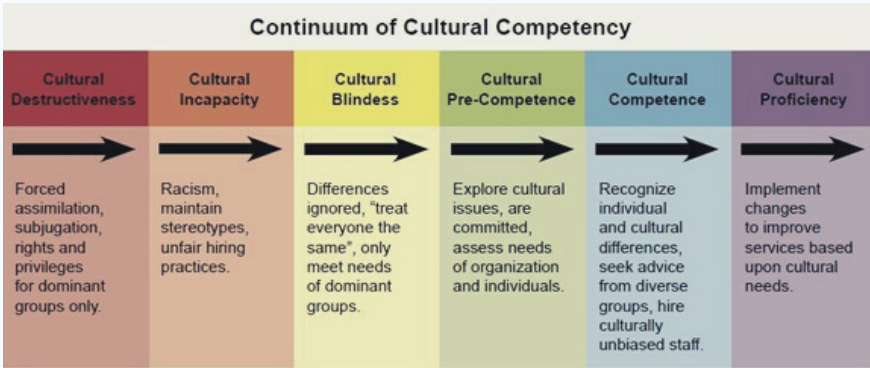
**INCLUSION IS  
HAVING A VOICE**

**AND BELONGING  
IS HAVING THAT  
VOICE BE HEARD.**

# WHY BE CULTURALLY COMPETENT

By being culturally competent you can help:

- Decrease stigma in receiving mental health or substance use treatment, and encourage more use of services
- Decrease discrimination
- Ensure that community members feel they have a voice and belong in their community
- Create a safe place for others to feel comfortable within their communities
- Allow for building better relationships within your community and your loved ones
- Accept different appearances, behaviors, and cultures



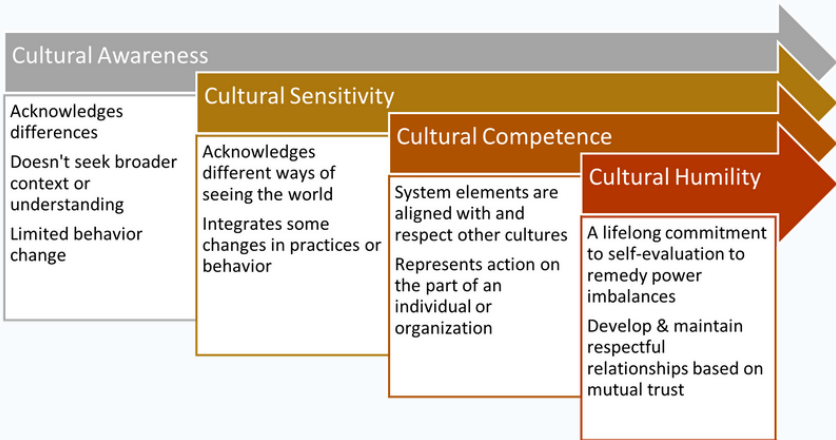
Being culturally competent is a process that is always continued and applies to individuals and organizations. We all have varying degrees by which we begin. In the image above you can see the six stages that outline cultural competence, beginning with cultural destructiveness. This stage can be harmful to other cultures and individuals. As you continue to learn more, you start leaning towards cultural proficiency, which consists of starting to implement changes based on different cultural needs. On an organizational level, there are five essential elements that contribute to a culturally competent system (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989). The system should (1) value diversity, (2) have the capacity for cultural self-assessment, (3) be conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact, (4) institutionalize cultural knowledge, and (5) develop programs and services that reflect an understanding of diversity between and within cultures. These five elements must be manifested in every level of the service delivery system. They should be reflected in attitudes, structures, policies, and services.

**SOURCE:** <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=7dVckZAYUmk%3D&portalid=0t>

# CULTURAL COMPETENCE AS A SPECTRUM

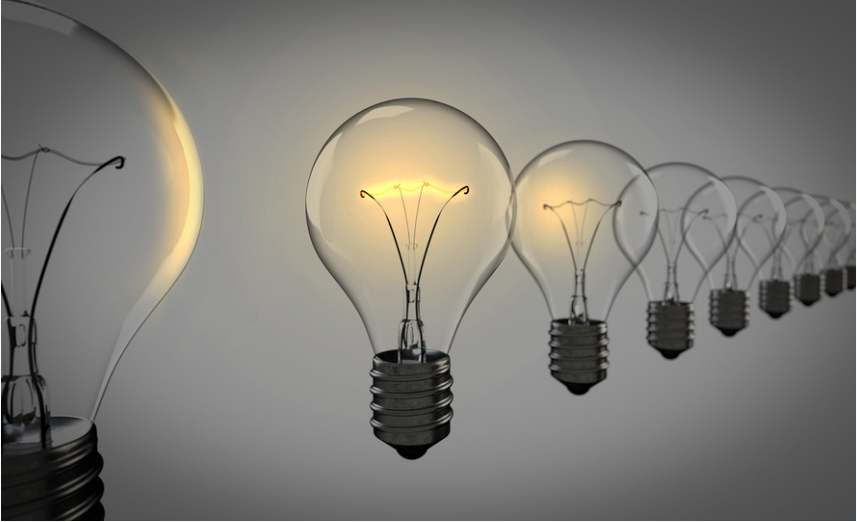
Cultural competence is explained using a spectrum that shows the process of becoming culturally competent. It shows how your thoughts evolve overtime, once you have a better concept of what it means to be culturally competent and apply it to your everyday life. It is also clear that society's understanding of the concept has evolved over time. Historically, having cultural awareness was enough for

practicing cultural competency, however, the spectrum has evolved over time. The ultimate goal is to practice and understand cultural humility, be respectful of others, be open and willing to learn, and embrace the notion that you will never be fully culturally competent. It is a lifelong commitment to better understand the differences in individuals you may interact, engage, or work with on a daily basis.



**"HOW WONDERFUL IT IS THAT NOBODY NEED  
WAIT A SINGLE MOMENT TO IMPROVE THE  
WORLD."**

**~ANNE FRANK**



## HOW CAN I BE CULTURALLY COMPETENT

It is important to again note, that being culturally competence is not a goal, but a way of being; it is something that you will always be learning. Below are some tips that will help you start practicing cultural competency:

- Attend yearly cultural competence training(s)
- Show representation of diverse populations in offices
- Offer translation services
- Hire a diverse staff
- Attend events held by diverse populations to build partnership
- Attend local cultural competence committee meetings in your area
- Offer information in different languages

“

**Examine your own cultural backgrounds and identities to increase awareness of personal assumptions, values, stereotypes, and biases.**

”

# Words Have Power

## PERSON-FIRST VS. STIGMATIZING LANGUAGE

Person-first language is used to speak appropriately and respectfully about an individual. It emphasizes the person first, thereby reducing stigma and shame.

# LANGUAGE MATTERS

### AVOID SAYING

### START SAYING

PEOPLE OF BOTH GENDERS

PEOPLE OF ALL GENDERS

FOREIGNERS

PERSONS FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY

CULT

RELIGION OR RELIGIOUS GROUP

THAT'S RETARDED

THAT'S SILLY/RIDICULOUS

THAT'S SO GAY

THAT'S SO SILLY/WEIRD

I'M/YOU'RE SO OCD

I'M CLEAN; SUPERSTITIOUS; LIKE THINGS A CERTAIN WAY

I'M TURNING INTO AN ALCOHOLIC

I DRANK A LOT THIS WEEKEND

TRANNY; SHE-MALE; CONFUSED

TRANSGENDER, TRANSEXUAL

CRAZY; PSYCHO; NUTTY

PERSON EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS/ISSUE

HALF CAST

MIXED RACE

ADDICT; USER; JUNKIE; ABUSER

PERSON WITH A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER



#ChangeTheLanguageASAP #EndStigmaASAP

[www.empoweredcommunities.org](http://www.empoweredcommunities.org)

# BUILD PERSONAL COMPETENCIES



## BE NONJUDGMENTAL

Shut down the tendency to view another person in a negative light.



## BE FLEXIBLE

Readjust quickly and effectively to changing situations.



## BE RESOURCEFUL

Know how to quickly get the things you need to respond well to any situation. Avoid showing irritation or annoyance in a culturally diverse situation.



## PERSONALIZE OBSERVATIONS

Use "I-messages" rather than "you-messages" (i.e. "I disagree" rather than "You're wrong."). Repeat back what you are hearing in conversation ("What I hear you saying is...?"). Listen actively by giving verbal indicators regularly while in conversation.



## PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR FEELINGS

Take your feelings seriously and keep in touch with how you feel about what the other person is saying in conversation.



## LISTEN CAREFULLY & OBSERVE ATTENTIVELY

This helps increase sensitivity to the whole message and not just what is being said in words.



## SHOW EMPATHY

Put yourself in the other person's shoes.



## HAVE PATIENCE

It's a positive way to respond to stress.



## MANAGE PERSONAL BIASES

Look beyond your personal view so that you can treat the person with you as an individual.



## ASSUME COMPLEXITY

Recognize in an ongoing way that in a culturally diverse environment, perspectives and outcomes are multiple.



## KEEP A SENSE OF HUMOR

Avoid taking yourself so seriously that you can't laugh at yourself.



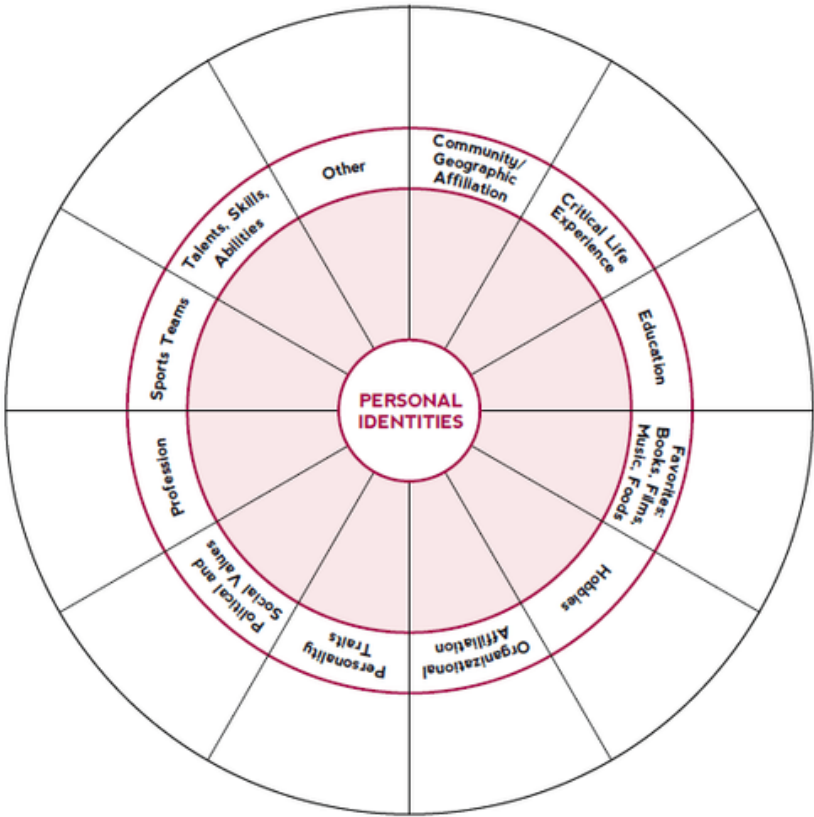
## SHOW RESPECT

Go out of your way to express in a genuine manner your understanding, honor, and esteem of others..



# PERSONAL IDENTITY WHEEL

Fill in your identity for each of the categories listed. In the inner circle, record the identities that are the most important or salient to you. In the outer circle, record the identities that are less important or salient to you.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How have one or more of your identities developed over the course of your life?
- When was the first time you FELT a social identity?
- How, when and where have you learned about your identities?

SOURCE: <https://sites.northwestern.edu/msaatnu/2020/07/09/the-i-in-identity-series-identity-wheel-self-reflection/>



AMERICAN  
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-  
HEARING  
ASSOCIATION

## Cultural Competence Checklist: **Personal Reflection**

### Ratings:

- 1 Strongly Agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly Disagree

**This tool was developed to heighten your awareness of how you view clients/patients from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) populations.**

**\*There is no answer key; however, you should review responses that you rated 5, 4, and even 3.**

- I treat all of my clients with respect for their culture.
- I do not impose my beliefs and value systems on my clients, their family members, or their friends.
- I believe that it is acceptable to use a language other than English in the U.S.
- I accept my clients' decisions as to the degree to which they choose to acculturate into the dominant culture.
- I provide services to clients who are GLBTQ (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, or Questioning).
- I am driven to respond to others' insensitive comments or behaviors.
- I do not participate in insensitive comments or behaviors.
- I am aware that the roles of family members may differ within or across culture or families.
- I recognize family members and other designees as decision makers for services and support.
- I respect non-traditional family structures (e.g., divorced parents, same gender parents, grandparents as caretakers).
- I understand the difference between a communication disability and a communication difference.
- I understand that views of the aging process may influence the clients'/families' decision to seek intervention.
- I understand that there are several American English dialects. I recognize that all English speakers use a dialect of English.

### **I understand that the use of a foreign accent or limited English skill is not a reflection of:**

- Reduced intellectual capacity
- The ability to communicate clearly and effectively in a native language

### **I understand how culture can affect child-rearing practices such as:**

- Discipline
- Dressing
- Toileting
- Feeding
- Self-help skills
- Expectations for the future
- Communication

### **I understand the impact of culture on life activities, such as:**

- Education
- Family roles
- Religion/faith-based practices
- Gender roles
- Alternative medicine
- Customs or superstitions
- Employment
- Perception of time
- Views of wellness
- Views of disabilities
- The value of Western medical treatment

### **I understand my clients' cultural norms may influence communication in many ways, including:**

- Eye contact
- Interpersonal space
- Use of gestures
- Comfort with silence
- Turn-taking
- Topics of conversation
- Asking and responding to questions
- Greetings
- Interruptions
- Use of humor
- Decision-making roles

\*While several sources were consulted in the development of this checklist, the following document inspired its design: Goode, T. D. (1989, revised 2002). Promoting cultural and linguistic competence self-assessment checklist for personnel Providing services and supports in early intervention and childhood settings.

**Reference this material as:** American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2010). *Cultural Competence Checklist: Personal reflection*. Available from <http://www.asha.org/uploadedFiles/Cultural-Competence-Checklist-Personal-Reflection.pdf>.

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"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new."

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