

Self-Assessments

Rationale for Self-Assessment



Health and human service organizations are recognizing the need to enhance services for culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Assessing attitudes, practices, policies and structures of administrators and service providers is a necessary, effective and systematic way to plan for and incorporate cultural competence within an organization. Determining the needs, preferences and satisfaction of family members/consumers is an essential aspect of this process.

Essential Elements in Achieving Cultural Competence

The National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) embraces a conceptual framework and model for achieving cultural competence adapted from the work of Cross et al., 1989. Cultural competence requires that organizations and their personnel have the 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 the diversity and cultural contexts of the individuals and communities served. Consistent with this framework, a major focus of the NCCC is the provision of technical assistance to conduct self-assessment within health care and human service agencies. The focus includes the development of assessment instruments and processes for both organizations and individuals.

The Benefits of Self-Assessment

The NCCC supports the concept that cultural competence is a developmental process and evolves over an extended period. Both organizations and individuals are at various levels of awareness, knowledge and skill acquisition along the cultural competence continuum. The capacity to engage in self-assessment helps organizations to:

- > gauge the degree to which they are effectively addressing the needs and preferences of culturally and linguistically diverse groups;
- > establish partnerships that will meaningfully involve families/consumers and key community stakeholders;
- > improve family/consumer access to and utilization of services and enabling supports;
- > increase family/consumer satisfaction with services received;
- > strategically plan for the systematic incorporation of culturally and linguistically competent policies, structures and practices;
- > allocate personnel and fiscal resources to enhance the delivery of services and enabling supports that are culturally and linguistically competent; and
- > determine individual and collective strengths and areas for growth.

There are numerous benefits to self-assessment. Such processes can lead to the development of a strategic organizational plan with clearly defined short-term and long-term goals, measurable objectives, identified fiscal and personnel resources, and enhanced consumer and community partnerships. Self-assessment can also provide a vehicle to measure outcomes for personnel, organizations, population groups and the community at large. The NCCC views self-assessment as an ongoing process, not a one-time occurrence. It offers organizations and their personnel the opportunity to assess individual and collective progress over time.

