What is Culture?

- Culture represents the vast structure of behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies and practices ‘PECULIAR’ to a particular group of people, and it provides them with:
  1. A general design for living, and
  2. Patterns for interpreting reality. Culture determines how we see the world and the way we see the world is reflected in our behavior

(Wade Nobles)

Components of Culture

- Branches / Behaviors – action you can see and measure and imitate with great accuracy
- Trunk / Beliefs – concepts or principles which one can grasp intellectually but not be able to accept or internalize
- Roots / Values – these constitute the basis on which societies are built and individuals act. Cultural values are internalized early in life and persist even when an individual moves to a very different cultural environment
What is Cultural Competency?

- Cultural competence is a developmental process effecting racial, ethnic, and cultural disparities in health and mental health care (Aponte, 1995; Armour et al., 2004; Boyle & Springer, 2001; Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989)

Linguistic Competence

- Linguistic Competence = the capacity of an organization and its personnel to communicate effectively, and convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse audiences, including persons of limited English proficiency, those who have low literacy skills or are not literate, and individuals with disabilities. The organization must have policies, structures, practices, procedures and dedicated resources to support this capacity (Goode & Jones, 2004)

Elements of Culturally Competent Practice
(Adapted from Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs, 1989; Devore & Schlesinger, 1999)

- **Values Diversity** - having an awareness and acceptance of differences in communication, life view, and definition of health and family
- **Cultural Self-Awareness** - able to assess oneself and having a sense of one’s own culture and its relationship to others
- **Manages the Dynamics of Difference** - understands that both the client and services bring culturally prescribed patterns of communication, etiquette, and problem solving styles to the situation as well as different histories & experiences
- **Institutionalizes Cultural Knowledge** - sanctions/mandates the incorporation of cultural knowledge into the system / organization
- **Adapts to Diversity** - individual’s practice / agency / organization makes adjustments to create a better fit between client and service through adaptations of policies, structure, values, services, and treatment
- **Adheres to Professional Ethics** - abiding by the Code of Ethic, Conduct, & Professionalism of the Profession & Agency / Organization
- **Knows Human Behavior** - understanding the total client (individual, family/group, or organization) in their environment
- **Understands Route to Assistance** - be aware of the impact a client’s route to assistance has on receptivity & service delivery.
- **Adapts Their Knowledge, Skills, & Techniques to Most Benefit the Client** - grant yourself the opportunity to adapt your knowledge, skills & techniques in order to meet the client where the client is.
Essential Knowledge of Cultural Competence
(Adapted from Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs, 1989)

- Family’s Culture - the family and the home may be great importance, the culturally competent professional knows the impact / importance of the client’s family to the client and treatment / services
- The Impact of Racism, Poverty on Behavior, Attitudes, Values, and Disabilities - understanding the client’s experiences, circumstances, and route to services
- Help-Seeking Behaviors of Groups of Color - understanding the beliefs and patterns regarding seeking assistance for services, e.g., health care & mental health
- Roles of Language, Speech Patterns, and Communication - adhering to linguistic competence which includes non-verbal communication and symbols
- Impact & Knowledge of Social Policies on Families of Color - the effect that policies and laws on individuals and families of color
- Resources within Communities of Color - services, resources, and specific forms of aid for various cultural groups
- Recognizes Conflicts between Professional Values and Values of Specific Groups - balancing and negotiating any conflicting values between the profession and the client’s culture; comfortably mediate value conflicts while allowing the client to maintain their values
- Power Relationships - influences that those in authority have over clients and individuals in subordinate positions
- Attitudes and Beliefs towards Mental Health - understanding the thoughts, feelings, and convictions various cultural groups have about mental health
- Impact of Situational & Ethnic Reality on Client - awareness of how a client’s own ethnicity and situation impacts their daily life, perceptions & receptivity to services.

Dr. David Satcher’s CRASH

C – Consider culture
R – Respect for culture
A – Assess the culture of the client; Affirm the client’s culture
S – Self-awareness of your own culture; Sensitivity to the other’s culture
H – Humility – as you will never be an expert in a culture different from your own