

# Working with Families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

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## Culture, Race and Ethnicity

- Culture: The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products
- Race: A group of people distinguished or classified together on the basis of genetically transmitted physical characteristics
- Ethnicity: A group of people sharing a common and distinctive racial, national, religious, linguistic or cultural heritage

## Culture, Race and Ethnicity

- Culture is learned from birth in the context of family, community and environment
- By the time children are five or six years old, they have internalized many of the basic values and beliefs of their native culture, including rules for social interaction, appropriate behavior, and learning style

## Culture, Race, and Ethnicity

- Culture is all the things that make us who we are
- Cultural competence is a program's ability to honor and respect the beliefs, interpersonal styles, attitudes, and behaviors of families served and multi-cultural staff providing the services. It includes values at the levels of policy, administration and practice

## Steps to Becoming more Culturally Responsive

- Learn about your own cultural background
- Learn about the culture of your profession, co-workers, agency, and other service providers. Recognize the similarities and differences
- Learn about the cultures of the families. Recognize the similarities and differences

## Steps...

- Learn about the historical, present and emerging cultural practices of each family and community.
- Identify positive, culturally appropriate ways to demonstrate respect for different lifestyles, values, and culture.

## Steps...

- Identify and use resource people to learn about the culture.
- Help families identify and use culturally appropriate resources and support networks.
- Remember to say “I don’t know”, and “I want to learn.”

## Cultural Continuum

- Level 1: Cultural Awareness: Acquiring basic information
- Level 2: Cultural Sensitivity: Developing understanding
- Level 3: Cultural Responsiveness: Using knowledge to respond appropriately
- Level 4: Cultural Competence: Using knowledge and skills to explore, develop and provide services

## A Comparison of Perspectives

### ➤ Mainstream Values

- Family consists of parents and children
- Relationship of family members determines responsibility
- Education is highly respected
- Health is viewed in terms of body or being
- Specific treatment is provided by specialist
- Child development is viewed in terms of developmental milestones

## A Comparison of Perspectives

### ➤ Mainstream Values Continued

- Written agreements and signatures are binding
- Asking questions and giving eye-contact show interest, attention, and respect
- Silence during conversation is uncomfortable and implies lack of interest/knowledge

## A Comparison of Perspectives

### ➤ Other Cultures

- Family includes extended family and community
- The family or community determines family member responsibilities
- Age and life experience mean more than years of education
- Health is viewed as a combined state of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being

## A Comparison of Perspectives

### ➤ Other Cultures Continued

- Treatment is provided to the “total” person and family
- Child development is viewed in terms of culturally determined events
- Personal/verbal agreements are binding
- Asking questions and giving eye-contact are disrespectful
- Silence during conversation signifies time for thought and respect for the speaker

## Importance of Introductions

- Taking the time for introductions is a valued and essential practice in many cultures
- Introductions are viewed as a way to show respect
- The formalities of introductions are highly valued
- The time taken for introductions and “small talk” is a necessary part of the process of building a trusting relationship

## Key Areas to Explore

- What are the families' concept about relationship?
- What are their definitions of family and their roles/responsibilities?
- What is their temporal focus?
- Historically what has the interaction been with the families and service providers?

## Showing Respect for Culturally Different Perspectives

- Provide more holistic intervention to families by:
  - Listening and acknowledging their ideas, concerns and feelings
  - Finding ways to demonstrate emotional support and respect

## Showing Respect for Culturally Different Perspectives

- Do not assume all families use traditional healing practices
- Determine if the family is using traditional healing by:
  - Asking each family if they are or will use traditional healing practices
  - Stating that you respect their decisions and want to support their efforts to help their child

## Showing Respect for Culturally Different Perspectives

- Do not ask a lot of questions about the traditional treatment
- Explain to the family that you do not need to know any details
- Explain that you do not want to schedule appointments that conflict with traditional activities
- Explain timelines and impact of traditional healing

## Showing Respect for Culturally Different Perspectives

- If you need to ask a family questions, always explain:
  - Why you want to know the information
  - How the information will be used to help their child
  - That it is alright if they need to discuss a question with other family members before answering

## Showing Respect for Culturally Different Perspectives

- Acknowledge the feelings of all family members
- Ask how you might assist and support them, or offer suggestions, such as providing an interpreter

## Suggested Methods for Increasing Family Involvement

- Develop a local resource network of parents and service providers from the community
- Work with other providers to develop a coordinated system of services for families whose children have special needs
- Get a copy of any resource directory that includes services for targeted community

## Suggested Methods for Increasing Family Involvement

- Assist parents of children with special needs to access the information and training they want/need
- Identify, recruit, and train parents from the community to be involved in planning committees, advocacy boards
- Support administrative efforts to recruit and hire professionals, paraprofessionals, and parents from CLD communities

## Making Things Work with the Resources You Have

- Determine who works best with the populations you serve
- Have discussions on what makes families feel comfortable with that person and vice versa
- Learn aspects of the culture that will make families feel more comfortable with you

## Making Things Work with the Resources You Have

- Families should be given the option to choose a case manager they trust and feel comfortable talking to
- The case manager should be familiar with and show respect for the cultural beliefs and practices of the family
- The case manager should explain information in an understandable way

## Making Things Work with the Resources You Have

- Providing on-going assistance and follow-up, as well as information and resources builds trust
- When referrals are made, accompany the family or provide as much information as possible
- Ask family who they want to include in their child's treatment program, encourage and facilitate the participation of family

## Making Things Work with the Resources You Have

- Identify members of the community or cultural group who can be trained to work with the families you serve
- Establish an assistant apprenticeship program to assist you in meeting the needs of CLD families

Notes:

## Activity: Making Things Work....

- What resources do you have?
- What families do you serve?
- What gaps exist in your ability to provide service to these families?
- What might you be able to do to fill in those gaps?
- ESTABLISH A PLAN

## Working with Interpreters and Translators

When? Who? How?

## Definitions

- Interpreter
  - Conveys information from one language to the other orally
- Translator
  - Conveys information from one language to the other in written form

## When?

- Ask the family if they would like to have an interpreter
- Use an interpreter when you need to communicate to the child or family in a language you do not speak
- When in doubt it is always safe to have an interpreter at hand

## Who?

- High ability in both languages – oral and written
- Can choose individuals that are more proficient orally for interpreter role
- Ability to use same style, dialect as family
- Identify individuals within courts, schools and public agencies

## Who?

- Staff?
- Family members?
- Family friends or neighbors?
- Community members?

## Who?

### ➤ Skilled

- Can they pass a test in the two languages
- Do they keep up with information well
- Do they appear to communicate the message
- What kind of feedback do you get from families or others about the interpreters/translators skills

## Who?

### ➤ “Highly” Trained

- Has been trained in interpreting process
- Understands technical language
- Understands the differences in types of translating processes; i.e., assessment, intervention, casual communication for understanding

## How?

- Review interpreting activity prior to event
- Allow interpreter to prepare if necessary
- Develop trust and confidence

## Assessment

- Must have understanding of rationale, procedures and information that is obtained from tests
- Should be allowed to review the test questions and examine their cultural relevancy
- Teach appropriate probing without violating testing procedures

## Assessment

- Train instructors to administer and score correctly
- Perform reliability checks on testing

## Conferences & Conversations

- Review purpose of conference or meeting
- Review the type of information that is sought prior to meeting
- Be aware that interpreter can omit, add, substitute or transform the message

## Intervention

- Use the interpreter to adapt and make intervention culturally relevant
- Provide intervention plan in writing
- All translated materials can be cross-checked with another bilingual person
- Review intervention materials and discuss purpose. Demonstrate.

## How?

- Brief, interact, debrief
- Allow interpreter to ask questions during interpreting activity if needed
- Professional should take notes of the interaction between client and interpreter
- Discuss observations

Bilingual Experience		Subsequent Experience	
		High Opp./ Motivation	Low Opp./ Motivation
Prior Experience	High Exposure to L1 & L2	Simultaneous Bilingualism	Receptive Bilingualism
	Low Exposure to 1 language	Rapid Successive Bilingualism	Slow Successive Bilingualism

## Principles of Language Development

- Children learn language to communicate
- Language flourishes when children have an opportunity to practice language
- Children learn 2<sup>nd</sup> languages in many different ways
- Support the child's home language development

## Principles of Language Development

- Interacting in meaningful ways is important to language development
- Children learning a 2<sup>nd</sup> language should be encouraged to experiment
- Mixing language is normal in bilingual development
- Language dominance is situational

## Evaluating Oral Language Development

- Obtain information from family members
- Observe the child's language abilities in different contexts
- Make a determination about the child's ability to use/understand both languages

## Questions for Parents

- How old is your child?
- What language was your child exposed to first?
- What language does your child use most frequently at home?
- What language do you use most frequently in talking to your child?

## Questions for Parents

- What language is most often spoken to adults in the home?
- What language is most often spoken to children?
- What do you believe is your child's strongest language?

## Appropriate Language Assessment

- Involves regular and periodic observations in many settings over time
- Relies on procedures that reflect on-going routine and activities
- Avoids placing child in artificial situations

## Guidelines for Assessing CLD Children

- Assessment must be developmentally and culturally appropriate
- The child's bilingual background must be considered
- Allow child to demonstrate abilities in their own way
- Assessment must take into account both languages

## Uses of Language by Young Children

- To express feelings “I loves my kitty”
- To express ideas “All gone book”
- To ask for help “Tie shoe”
- To engage in dramatic play “You be car”
- To describe “mommy lady”
- To solve problem “Me do it”
- To inquire “where doggy?”

## Guidelines for Interpreting & Using Information

- Have enough valid, reliable and representatives examples of the child’s behavior before making a decision
- Look for patterns, not isolated instances
- Think as performance as constantly changing, not as a specific point on a scale
- Generate multiple hypotheses about possible meanings
- Hold interpretations and conclusions tentatively

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