

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

A Definition of Culture

Culture is defined as the integrated pattern of thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions associated, wholly or partially, with racial, ethnic, or linguistic groups, as well as with religious, spiritual, biological, geographical, or sociological characteristics. Culture is dynamic in nature, and individuals may identify with multiple cultures over the course of their lifetimes.

Culture includes but is not limited to, the shared values, norms, traditions, customs, art, history, folklore, religious and healing practices and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group that are generally transmitted to succeeding generations.

Cultural Competence

Cultural Competence defined: When a congruent set of behaviors, attitudes, skills, policy and procedures come together in a system, agency, or among individual professionals to enable them to work effectively in cross cultural situations. (Cross, Brazon & Issacs, 1989)

Preference, Prejudice and Power:

- **Preference:** can be benign, causing no harm. “I prefer vanilla ice cream.” When it becomes “I prefer that those people stay over there!” - then we start to cross a line.
- **Prejudice:** an emotional commitment to a particular point of view, not swayed by contradictory evidence.
- **Power:** the element in all “isms” to affect another person’s life. Power and privilege are linked; for example, one’s ability to make a decision without being challenged. If you are a police officer, or administrative assistant or a health care provider, you can make decisions about another person’s life simply by sharing or neglecting to share information- such as what is or is not written in their medical chart.

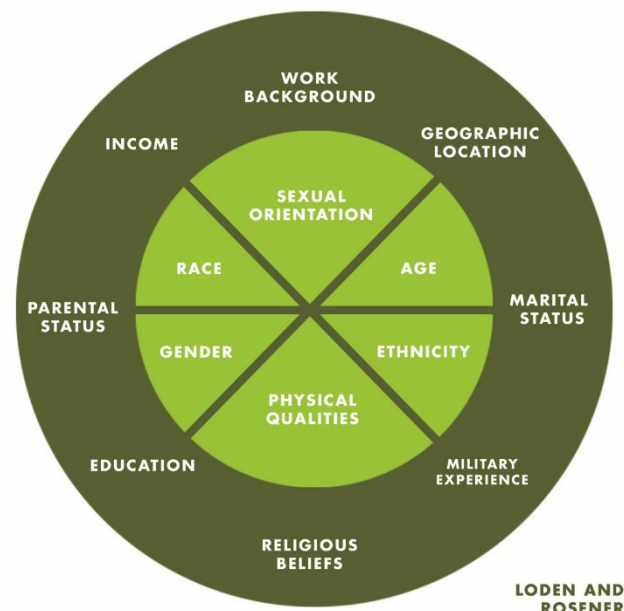
Diversity

Diversity simply means differences and the dimensions of diversity are the lenses that we and others use to identify and differentiate people.

There are two levels of Diversity: Primary Dimensions which are inborn differences that have an impact throughout one’s life and Secondary Dimensions which are acquired or changed throughout one’s life.

(<http://www.ivygroupllc.com/executive-leader/dimensions-of-diversity/>)

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY



(<http://www.slideshare.net/complianceandsafety/ch-13-32367825>)

Stigma, Discrimination and Labeling

Almost 21 million Americans need treatment and recovery, and are not getting it. Stigma and discrimination prevent people from getting the help they need. Working with peers is inevitably a cross-cultural enterprise and “How to” and cookbook approaches actually work to promote stereotyping. In order to provide sensitive and effective care to persons from cultures that are different from our own, we must:

- **Be aware of our own cultural values and beliefs and recognize how they influence our attitudes and behaviors.**
- **Develop an understanding of the cultural beliefs and values of others and how they are influenced by them.**

Cultural Competence starts with hope and recognizes that stories are often more powerful than facts. Everything we do exists within a cultural context. **Becoming culturally competent is a process not an endpoint and becoming aware of our own personal cultural filters is essential to our work as.**