



Iowa Girls Justice Initiative – January 8, 2016

CULTURALLY CONSCIENCE/ RESPONSIVE SERVICES FOR YOUNG WOMEN



Strategies for programming

- No single strategy will work for all youth, even within a single community. Programs are most likely to be effective when they—
- Offer opportunities—such as community service—that develop life skills so young people can prepare for their futures.
- Programs that highlight and improve resiliency factors such as positive cultural–ethnic identity, high expectations, caring and supportive adult



Strategies for programing cont.

- Involve community members and youth in planning and implementation
- Focus on the assets of teenage participants and on the needs of the whole young person
- Consider the social and cultural factors that influence behavior
- Provide peer support to change peer norms
- Offer gender-specific opportunities and activities
- Aim at building skills
- Use multiple pathways to reach and empower youth in the community



What Is Culture?

Define culture as a “system of interrelated values [that] influence and condition perception, judgment, communication and behavior”

- Everyone looks at the world through a lens, as though through a pair of glasses. While this lens is unique to each individual, the worldviews of people of similar background or social experience is often similar.
- To understand a culture is to understand a particular worldview.



Definitions

To provide
common ground
for discussion

One of the most
problematic issues
in Iowa

- **Traditional** – holding on to a majority of the traits from the culture of origin while adopting only a few of the traits of the dominant culture.
- **Acculturated** – having given up most of the cultural traits of the culture of origin and assumed the traits of the dominant culture.
- **Bicultural** – able to function effectively in the dominant culture while holding on to some traits of their own culture.
- **Marginal** – having little real contact with traits of either culture.



Racism

Racism can be simply defined:

**Prejudice + Power
= Racism**

- A blunt discussion of racism and an understanding of its effects on individuals and communities is essential for building cultural competence.
- Prejudice means unreasonable feelings, opinions or attitudes, especially of a hostile nature, directed against any group.



Racism

- Anybody can be prejudiced and everyone is.
- Any group can be prejudiced against any other group.
- Just because a group is often the target of prejudice does not necessarily stop members of that group from being prejudiced against some other group.



On the same page

- Some individuals—due to cultural identity, gender, skin color, national origin, or sexual orientation, among other attributes—have greater and easier access to a society's resources than do others.
- In discussing inequitable power and resource distribution, social scientists usually use privilege to indicate preferred access to power and resources.
- They use oppression to indicate barriers to power and resources.



What Is Cultural Competence?

Cultural competence moves beyond “cultural awareness” (knowledge of another cultural group) and “cultural sensitivity” (knowledge as well as experience with another culture).

- Cultural competence acknowledges and responds to the unique worldviews of different people and communities.
- The way an individual views the world comes from her/his life experiences, many of which are shared by others within the same culture.
- To understand the individual, one must understand these experiences.
- Besides recognizing cultural patterns of behavior, the culturally competent person must also acknowledge the social inequities faced by others



Cultural Competence and Public Health

- Cultural competence matters because the public health community acknowledges that using one method to reach every person and every community is far less effective—and sometimes completely ineffective—than creating and/or adapting programs to meet the specific cultural context of a particular population.
- For public health endeavors, cultural competence is the level of knowledge-based skills necessary for providing effective services to individuals from a particular group—however the group is defined.



- A culturally competent program values diversity, conducts self–assessment, addresses issues that arise when different cultures interact, acquires and institutionalizes cultural knowledge, and adapts to the cultures of the individuals and communities served.
- This may mean providing an environment in which youth from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds feel comfortable discussing culturally beliefs and sharing their cultural practices.



Creating Culturally Competent Programming

- Creating culturally competent programs is not difficult but it requires conscientious attention.
- Recognize that cultural competence is an ongoing process and make a commitment to building cultural competence in all available ways.



Important Steps

- Assess your own values, attitudes, and beliefs about different groups.
- Ask other staff members to take stock as well so that the organization can serve youth in an open, honest, respectful manner.



More Steps

- Incorporate traditional elements of the culture(s) of youth served.
- Building upon the cultural beliefs and practices of youth will reinforce the attitudes and skills the program seeks to strengthen.



continued

- Recognize that youth are individuals, not representatives of their ethnic or racial group.
- Get to know each individual in the program.
- Recognize the cultural roots of many behaviors. Youth from different cultures may behave differently, in accordance with what they have learned from their family.



Examples

- Some cultures encourage youth to challenge gender roles, whereas others do not.
- Some encourage an assertive communication style; others encourage a more passive communication style.



Sexuality is included

- LBQ/GNCT – (lesbian, bisexual, questioning/gender non-conforming, transgender)
- Many of our youth we serve throughout our system are still developing this identity and it can change over times and it cross sections with other demographics such as race/ethnicity which we refer to intersectionality



Sexuality is
included

- They/them pronouns
- (Cis) gender – meaning they identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.



More considerations

- Acknowledge that religious and other beliefs may influence how a young person responds different subjects
- Some cultures discourage open communication about such topics like sexuality, making it difficult for youth to discuss, especially in large groups.



continued

- Recognize that youth from culturally diverse backgrounds may experience varying degrees of acculturation into and comfort with the dominant culture.
- Recognize that some youth are bicultural or multicultural and strongly resist labels that emphasize only one or another of these cultural identities.



- Support young people's exploration of and pride in their individual racial/ethnic identity, including a bicultural or multicultural identity.
- Ask youth how they self-identify and respect that self-identification.
- This will support youth in building self-esteem and in actively and assertively discrediting stereotypes and myths about people of different racial/ethnic backgrounds.



- Develop a policy regarding discriminatory words and behaviors based on racial/ethnic or cultural identity, including sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Post the policy in public areas and develop clear guidelines regarding disciplinary action.
- Keep yourself updated on slang that can be used to discriminate



- Involve youth as full partners in designing, implementing, and evaluating the programs aimed at youth.
- Ensure that youth leaders actually represent *all* the cultures served by the program.



- Encourage family involvement.
- Families offer a positive source of cultural strength as well as a primary source of information and support.
- Plan activities that encourage family participation.



- **Develop participatory, collaborative partnerships with the community.**
- For example, an advisory committee of community representatives—including youth—can assess the needs of the community.



- Make every effort to link with existing community service organizations to broaden the array of services available to the community's youth.
- Hire diverse staff reflective of the youth served in the program.
- Program leaders, guest speakers, and/or volunteers should share the same cultural and ethnic backgrounds as youth.



- Provide language assistance and hire bilingual and bicultural staff.
- Schedule training workshops on cultural competence to provide ongoing education, moving staff from cultural awareness to cultural competence.



- Use diverse materials, including brochures and videos, that are reflective of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the youth and that are culturally, linguistically, and age appropriate.
- **Planners will need to choose these materials wisely.**



- Creating culturally competent programs requires work and determination.
- The rewards, however, include more effectively 1) reaching young people, 2) supporting youth in attaining their individual goals.



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Thank You

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