

Cultural and Linguistic Competency/Diversity Policy and Procedures

I. POLICY

- A. It is the policy of Harris County Systems of Hope (SOH) that all SOH staff, partner agencies, and vendor/contract personnel will provide culturally competent services to youth & families throughout the Harris County system of care and to ensure youth & families receive effective, understandable and respectful care that is provided in a manner compatible with their cultural, health beliefs, practices and preferred language.

The integration of cultural, spiritual, health and healing practices, and beliefs which promote the individual client's wellness will be integrated in the assessment, planning, intervention, treatment and ongoing review of care. Cultural considerations for appropriate care include but are not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, age, preferred language, English proficiency, sexual orientation, immigration status, and acculturation factors, spiritual beliefs and practices, physical abilities and limitations, family roles, community networks, literacy, employment and socioeconomic factors.

Moreover, the implementation of cultural and linguistic competence policies and procedures throughout the system of care is intended to reduce disparities that exist within systems related to equity, access, utilization and treatment of programs and services for children, youth and families in Harris County.

- B. It is the policy of Harris County Systems of Hope (SOH) that all SOH staff, partner agencies and vendor/contract personnel will implement strategies to recruit, retain and promote at all levels of their respective organization a diverse staff and leadership that are representative of the demographic characteristics of Harris County.
- C. It is the policy of Harris County Systems of Hope (SOH) that all SOH staff, partner agencies and vendor/contract personnel to ensure that staff at all levels and across all disciplines receive ongoing education and training in culturally and linguistically standards and appropriate service delivery.

DEFINITION OF CULTURAL & LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

Cultural competence is a process that develops over an extended period of time (continuum). It is the integration of knowledge and information about people and people groups into approaches and techniques that match the person's culture and cultural needs and/or requests and increase the quality and appropriateness of services, which has an impact on outcomes.

Culturally Competent mental health care throughout the system of care relates to the individual skills and competencies of personnel, in addition to the organizational practices of an entity and its promotion of culturally competent assessments and interventions, practices, training, and service approaches, including but not limited to marketing strategies and techniques that mirror the service population and increase the quality and appropriateness of mental health care.

Cultural Competence is a set of values and principles which are reflected within behaviors, attitudes and structures of agencies, family youth/organizations, providers and community stakeholders within the Systems of Hope to result in appropriate and effective services for all.

Cultural Competence is the capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment (3) manage the dynamics of difference (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge (5) adapt to diversity and cultural contexts of the communities.

Cultural and Linguistic Competency/Diversity Policy and Procedures

Linguistic Competency refers to the capacity of agencies/organizations, individuals, providers and community stakeholders within Harris County Systems of Hope and the broader community to communicate effectively, and convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse audiences. Linguistic competence involves the development of interagency and internal capacity to respond effectively to the mental health literacy and communication needs of the populations served, and to possess the policy, structures practices procedures and dedicated resources to support this capacity.

II. PROCEDURE

Cultural & Linguistic Competence Plan

It is the policy of Harris County Systems of Hope (SOH) that all SOH staff, partner agencies, and vendor/contract personnel to create a Cultural Competence plan on a regularly defined basis (suggest annually) and submit said plan to the designated organization or internal review committee empowered to monitor and implement quality assurance measures. Cultural Competence Plans shall be developed based on cultural competence assessments that shall include, but not be limited to review of the following domains: use of community demographic information, community needs assessment and/or client service satisfaction survey (or equivalent), culturally competent treatment planning, historical data, community based services and supports, staff development and quality improvement.

The cultural competence plan shall address the domains specific to each respective organizational cultural competence assessment and is intended to report on specific outcomes of each organization's quality assurance plan and measurement of quality improvement.

Linguistic Competence & Language Access Services

It is the policy of Harris County Systems of Hope (SOH) that all SOH staff, partner agencies, and vendor/contract personnel to provide readily accessible resources for youth and families with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) as well as speech, hearing, and visual impairment. This includes but is not limited to bi-lingual or multi-lingual staff, interpreters, special devices and other communication aids as needed to facilitate effective, culturally and linguistic competent communication. Under no circumstance should youth under the age of 18 be the interpreter for families or consumers enrolled in Systems of Hope or partner agencies services.

Harris County Systems of Hope and community partners shall not deny care and treatment to or otherwise discriminate against persons who are non-English speaking, deaf, or hard of hearing and visually impaired. In addition, Harris County Systems of Hope staff, partner agencies, and vendor/contract personnel shall facilitate access to services by persons who are non-English speaking, deaf or hard of hearing or visually impaired persons

Cultural and Linguistic Competency/Diversity Policy and Procedures

- References:** FEDERAL LAW: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 601, (42 USC 2000d)
- Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2000). Americans with Disabilities Act (Public Law 101-336.)
National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Health Care, Federal Register, 65(247)80865-80879.
- United States Department of Health and Human Services
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/resources/specialtopics/lep/>
- Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs. (1989). *Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care: A Monograph of Effective Services for Minority Children who are Severely Emotionally Disturbed: Volume I.*
- Davis, K. (1997). *Exploring the intersection between cultural competency and managed behavioral health care policy: Implications for state and county mental health agencies.* Alexandria, VA: National Technical Assistance Center for State Mental Health Planning.
- Goode & Jones (modified 2004), National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child & Human Development.

Cultural and Linguistic Competency/Diversity Policy and Procedures

Appendix

Partners

Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults
Harris County Juvenile Probation
Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County
DePelchin Children's Center
Houston Department of Health and Human Services
Texas Department of Family Protective Services
Alliance for Children and Families/Community Resource Coordination Group
Joint City/County Commission on Children
Parent Empowerment Group
Youth Advisory Council
Houston Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
National Alliance on Mental Illness, Metropolitan Houston
National Alliance on Mental Illness, West Houston
Attention Deficit Disorder Association, South Region

Vendor

An individual or group that provides a service for payment.

Contract Personnel

An individual or group that provides a service to a company but is not employed by the company.

Family Structure

Family composition is defined as the composition and membership of the family and the organization and patterning of relationships among individual family members, as defined by family members. This includes, but is not limited to: families with children, married couple families with children, single parent families, same sex partners, grandparents as caregivers and kinship families.

Policy prepared by (Date): LDBJ, DC-M 04/28/10	
Reviewed by CLC Committee (Date): 05/17/10, 06/23/10	
Approved by CLC Committee (Date): 06/23/10	
Presented to SOH Administrative Team (Date)	
Approved at SOH Administrative Team (Date)	
Presented to Governing Board (Date)	
Approved at Governing Board (Date)	