Introduction

Cultural Competence Standards Add Value to United Way of Central Ohio and its Agencies

Cultural Competency is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, attitudes and used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services and thereby produce better outcomes (Adapted from Cross et. al., 1989).

The Untied Way of Central Ohio through its Cultural Competence Task Force has developed cultural competence standards to be used by United Way and its member agencies and programs to enhance their ability to:

- Serve an increasingly diverse Central Ohio community

- Work more effectively in cross cultural situations.

Why is Cultural Competence Important

- Central Ohio and the nation as a whole are experiencing rapidly shifting demographic patterns that increasingly challenge service delivery system to provide culturally and linguistically competent services.

- To improve the quality of services, increase satisfaction for customers/consumers, increase retention/recruitment, increase access to services and ultimately meet outcomes.

Cultural Competence Standards give United Way and its member agencies and programs another opportunity to demonstrate their added value. The standards will assist United Way and its member agencies and programs in planning and decision making, establishing priorities, building capacity, maintaining accountability and allocating resources.

Guiding Principles

The following principles were used to develop the Cultural Competence Standards.

- Pursue partnerships with systems, funders, investors, accrediting bodies and others for the purposes of integrating standards and eliminating duplication.

- Recognize all agencies are different and foster the development of standards that will identify their current status and facilitate continued growth.

- Consider United Way's impact areas, community results and strategies throughout the process.

- Make sure standards are appropriately flexible.

- Solicit input and feedback from individuals representative of all members of the community.

- Remain focused on capacity building.

- Communicate using culturally appropriate concepts.

- Provide a mechanism for standards to evolve, change, and be updated.

Key Terms

The following definitions were used to ensure consistency in the standards development process.

Culture – shared set of values, beliefs, customs, celebrations, practices of a racial, ethnic or self-identified group.

Cultural Competence – integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, attitudes and used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services and thereby producing better outcomes. (Adapted from Cross et. al., 1989)

Providing Culturally Competent Services – consumers/customers perceive services as relevant and helpful for achieving their desired outcomes. (Dana, 1993)

Standards – a set of guidelines established by the United Way of Central Ohio intended to inform, guide, and facilitate required and recommended practices related to the provision of culturally competent services by funded agencies.

Outcomes – expected desired results that are achieved as a result of adherence to Cultural Competence Standards.

Indicators – specific items of information that track an Agency and/or program's adherence to Cultural Competence Standards. They describe observable, measurable characteristics that represent achievement of the standard.

Outcomes

Implementation of United Way's Cultural Competence Standards will impact the Agency, its staff, volunteers, programs, and consumers/customers. The following are specific outcomes that can be achieved.

Agency Outcomes
- Culturally competent organization
- Inclusive organization
- Improved operations and services
- Organizational goals attained
- Decreased cultural conflicts

Staff and Volunteer Outcomes
- Reduced bias
- Satisfied staff and volunteers
- Diverse staff at all levels of the organization
- Staff and volunteers treated with dignity and respect
- Staff and volunteers work effectively in cross cultural situations
- Staff and volunteers needs recognized

Program Outcomes
- Increased access to programs and services
- Diverse participation in programs and services
- Improved quality of services and programs
- Increased programs, activities, products directed toward previously underserved populations

Consumer/Customer Outcomes
- Consumers/customers received quality services
- Satisfied consumers/customers
- Increased access to consumers/customers
- Consumers/customers feel respected and comfortable
- Consumers/customers outcomes are achieved
- Consumers/customers received services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate
- Consumers/customers needs recognized and met

Leadership (L)

Standards
- **L 1** Leaders of the organization are appropriately representative of the consumers/customers in the organization's service area, community at large and fully engaged in the decision making process.
- **L2** Leaders are knowledgeable of and demonstrate commitment to the diversity of the staff who work for the organization and consumers/customers who represent the targeted population(s) and community at large.
- **L3** Leaders ensure the development and implementation of a strategic plan that results in a culturally competent organization/system.

Key Terms
- **Leaders** – Individuals in positions that have governance/oversight responsibility for the organization (e.g., Boards, Advisory Councils, Policy Groups, etc.) and individuals in senior management positions that have responsibility for day-to-day operations of the organization (e.g., Executive Director, CEO, COO, Directors, Department/Division Heads, etc.)
- **Appropriately representative** – Composition of leadership takes into account the: consumers/customers in the:
  - Consumers/customers in the organization's service area
  - Organization's Mission
  - Organization's fundamental beliefs/practices (customs)
- **Service Area** – Area that organization targets to provide its services and/or programs.
- **Fully Engaged** – Leaders perspectives are valued and input is solicited in all issues and decisions affecting the organization.
- **Culturally Competent Organization** – A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in an organization and among staff that enables the organization and its staff to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

Vision/Mission (V/M)

Standards
- **V/M 1** Vision/Mission statements demonstrate the organization's understanding of and commitment to the value of diversity.

Key Terms
- **Diversity** – "A collective mixture characterized by differences and similarities that are applied in pursuit of organizational objectives." Workforce diversity includes race, sex and gender identity, ethnicity, physical ability, religion, belief systems, sexual orientation, age, parental status, economic status, geographic background, etc. (Hubbard, 2002)
- **Vision Statement** – A statement that creates a desired future state for the organization, a condition that is better than the present. This statement is lofty and requires the organization to continually stretch or reach beyond a comfortable state.
- **Mission Statement** – A statement that defines "why the organization exists." The statement succinctly clarifies the organization's purpose. This statement drives the organization's practices and behaviors.

Staff (S)

Standards

- **S 1** Staff are appropriately representative of the consumers/customers in the organization's service area, community at large and fully engaged in the decision making process.
- **S2** Diversity of consumers/customers and community at large guides staff recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention.
- **S3** Staff is knowledgeable of and demonstrate commitment to the diversity of the consumers/customers who represent the targeted population(s) and community at large.

Key Terms

- **Staff** – Individuals who are employed by the organization either on a full time or part-time basis.

Volunteers (V)

Standards

- **V 1** Volunteers are appropriately representative of the consumers/customers in the organization's service area, community at large.
- **V2** Diversity of consumers/customers and community at large guides in volunteer recruitment and engagement.

Key Terms

- **Volunteers** – Individuals who choose to govern (e.g., Board members), work and support the organization.

Training/Development (T/D)

Standards

- **T/D 1** Cultural competence and diversity is incorporated in all training activities, programs, materials and products.
- **T/D2** Cultural competence and diversity training activities, programs, materials and products target personnel at all levels of the organization, including board members, management, program staff, support staff, and volunteers.
- **T/D3** Individuals/Vendors who provide training are culturally competent.

Key Terms

- **Training** – Any activity, program, materials and/or products that are used to enhance learning and/or skill development.

Work /Service Climate (W/SC)

Standards
- **W/SC 1** Location of programs/activities is both accessible and comfortable for diverse consumers/customers in targeted service area.
- **W/SC2** Interior design, materials, and services are welcoming and culturally/linguistically sensitive to diverse consumers/customers in targeted service area.
- **W/SC3** Facilities accommodate the needs of individuals with seen and unseen physical and mental health challenges.

Key Terms
- **Accessible** – Organization takes into account geography, physical space, availability, hours of operation/service, and affordability in relation to consumers/customers in targeted service area and community at large.
- **Comfortable** – Organization feels welcoming, is safe, and atmosphere is reflective of consumers/customers in targeted service area and community at large.
- **Culturally and linguistic sensitive** – Considers each individual's culture and language.

Cultural Concepts (CC)

Standards
- **CC 1** Staff and Volunteers communicate with consumers/customers in language and customs that are intelligible, supportive and welcoming to consumers/customers.
- **CC2** Organizations are sensitive to customs and practices in scheduling and conducting activities.

Key Terms
- **Cultural concepts** – Values, beliefs, behaviors, practices and language that are unique to a particular culture.
- **Communication** – Includes both verbal and nonverbal communication patterns.

Outcomes Management (OM)

Standards
- **OM 1** Cultural competence expectations are integrated into all performance measures including individual, program, and the overall organization.
- **OM2** Information systems capture relevant consumer, customer, staff, and volunteer data that reflect cultural competence standards and expectations in a way that is appropriate, not intrusive and maintains confidentiality.
- **OM3** Organization uses culturally relevant information to improve organizational performance.

Community Involvement (C)

Standards

- **C 1** Organizations utilize levels of collaboration that are mutually beneficial and involve groups representative of the diverse consumers/customers in the target service area to improve services and programs.

Key Terms

- **Collaboration** – A relationship building process that benefits all entities and includes four levels: (1) networking, (2) cooperation, (3) partnerships, and (4) full collaboration.

Service Delivery/Program Development (SD/PD)

Standards

- **SD/PD 1** Services are culturally and linguistically competent for a diverse group of consumers/customers in the target service area.
- **SD/PD2** Programs are culturally and linguistically competent for a diverse group of consumers/customers in the target service area.
- **SD/PD3** Consumers/customers have a meaningful voice in developing services and programs.
- **SD/PD4** Consumers/customers have linguistic access to bilingual and interpreter services.

Conclusion

By implementing system wide Cultural Competency Standards, the United Way and its affiliate agencies will more effectively meet the needs of an increasingly diverse central Ohio community and work more effectively in cross cultural situations. Committees made up of community volunteers and affiliate agency representatives have worked to develop indicators for each of the Standards along with an Assessment Tool. To gauge agency progress in adhering to the Standards, the United Way and its affiliates will participate in periodic self assessments.

Find out more about United Way at liveunitedcentralohio.org.

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