



**BIHPI/BIHCC**  
**Collaborative Learning**  
**Cultural Competency**

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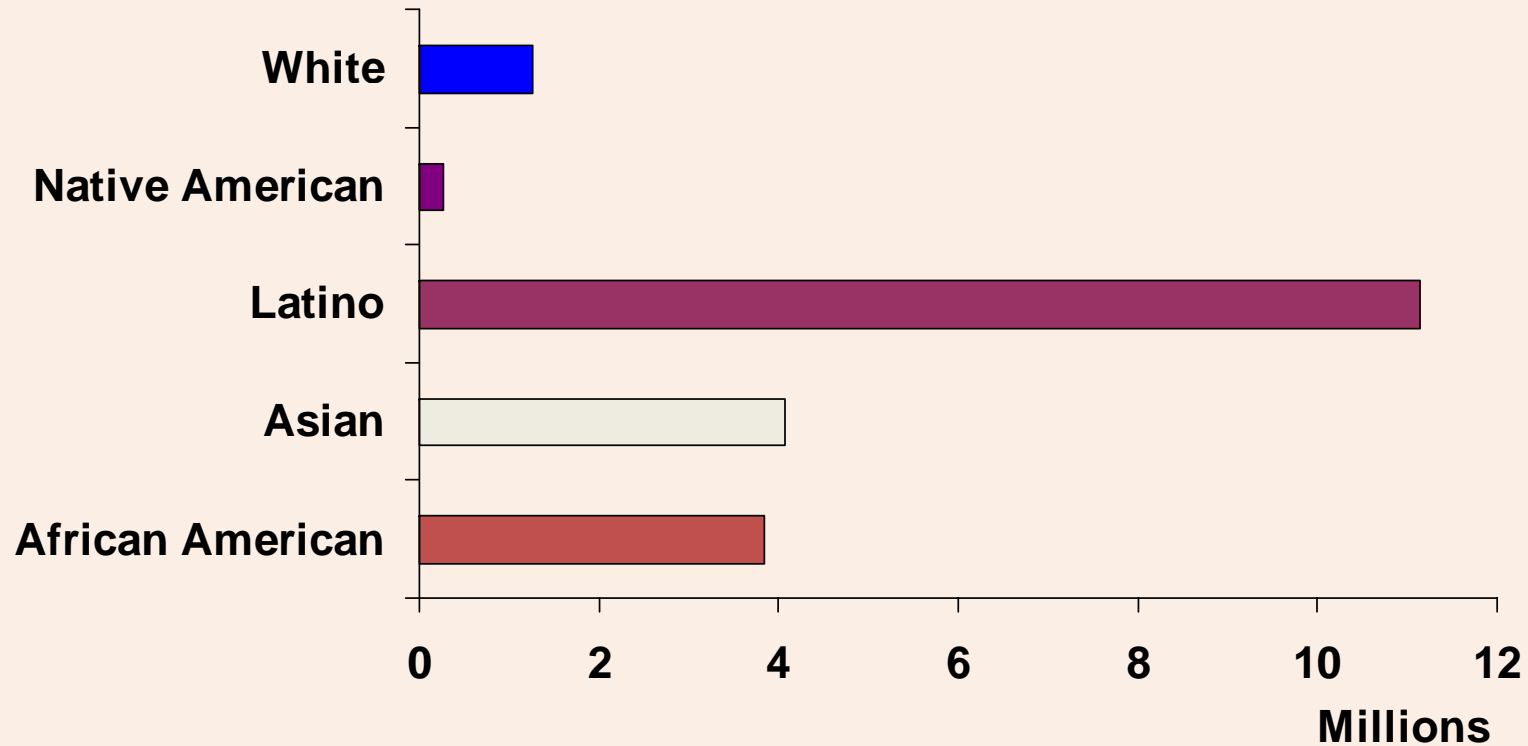
# Exploring Terms

## “I – Time”

Take a few moments to think about the following terms:

- **Diversity**
- **Equality**
- **Equity**
- **Cultural Competency**

# The Demographics of the U.S. are Changing Rapidly



Projected Increase in the Population of 25-64 Year-Olds, 2000 to 2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Projections

# What is Cultural Competency?

## **Definition:**

Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

(Cross et al., 1989; Isaacs & Benjamin, 1991)

# Isaacs and Benjamin (1991)

- focused on the need for specific training in cultural competency in response to the growing and increasingly diverse population.
- The authors noted:

A human service delivery system, conceived and administered without an understanding of cultural diversity and a commitment to taking that diversity into account in service delivery, training, policy development, and evaluation, is not only an institution born of unearned arrogance, but also one likely to provide inappropriate, ineffective, and potentially damaging services.

(Isaacs & Benjamin, 1991, p. v)

# Isaacs and Benjamin (1991)

- These seminal researchers, like others who would follow, examined ways to improve on the appropriateness and the efficacy of service delivery by focusing attention on the varying needs of diverse populations.
- The authors chose Blacks, Asians, Hispanics and Native Americans due to historical patterns of neglect of these populations in the areas of education, employment, politics, health and mental health care (Cross et al., 1989).

# Historical Definition of Cultural Competency

Twenty-seven years after Baptiste et al. (1980) wrote for educators and 18 years after Cross et al. (1989), defined cultural competency for mental health providers, Olsen, et al., (2006) defined cultural competency for healthcare providers as “the ability to work effectively across cultures” (p. 3).

Elam et al. (2007) writing for 21st century educators defined cultural competency in a school setting as “a process based on a clearly defined set of core values and principles that support policies, practices, behaviors, attitudes, and structures that enable educators to work effectively across the cultures their students represent” (p. 1).

# What is Cultural Competency?

## **Definition:**

The word **culture** is used because it implies the integrated patterns of human behavior that includes thoughts, communication, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups.

# Competence

The word competence is used because it implies having the capacity to function in a particular way: the capacity to function within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior defined by a group. Being competent in cross-cultural functioning means learning new patterns of behavior and effectively applying them in the appropriate settings.

## CULTURAL "ICEBERG"

### SURFACE CULTURE

Art · Music

Literature · Drama

Dance · Games · Cooking

Dress



Primarily  
in  
awareness

### FOLK CULTURE



### FOLK CULTURE

Modesty · Beauty · Childrearing · Inheritance

Cosmology · Authority · Courtship · Sin · Justice

Work · Leadership · Decision Making · Disease · Cleanliness

Department · Problem Solving · Non-verbal Communication ·

Relationship to Nature · Time · Language · Social interaction · Emotion

Roles related to age, sex, class, occupation · Kinship · friendship · Individualism/Collectivism



Primarily  
out of  
awareness

### DEEP CULTURE

Adapted from Gary Weaver, in R.M. Paige, ed. *Cross-Cultural Orientation: New Conceptualizations and Applications* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1986).

# The Cultural Iceberg

## Barriers To Creating Culturally and Linguistically Competent Organizational Culture

- Lack of understanding
- Lack of resources
- Lack of leadership commitment
- Lack of training opportunities
- Staff resistance

# Why is Cultural Competency Needed?

- Hispanics are projected to outnumber Blacks early in the 21st century. By 2025, Hispanics will account for 18 percent of the U.S. population, while only 13 percent of the population will be African American.
- Over the same period, the percentage of Whites will decline by ten percentage points, to 62 percent. If current trends continue, almost half of the U.S. population will be non-White by 2050.
  - The Changing American Pie, 1999 and 2025

What makes an organization culturally and linguistically competent is determined by how effectively the institution addresses the dynamics of cultural differences through the five Ps:

# 5P'S

- Perspectives
- Policies
- Programs
- Personnel
- Practices

# General Do's And Do Nots

## Do

- Recognize, respect, honor and celebrate differences
- Develop a working knowledge of clients cultural/historical background
- Try to assess informally the level of acculturation
- Use culturally and linguistically appropriate communication strategies
- Promote inclusion at all levels

## Do not

- Use information that you may have about the cultural group to prejudge, stereotype, discriminate, etc.
- Patronize but try to be empathetic
- Criticize or 'blame' the culture
- Assume that your cultural practices/expressions are appropriate for everybody else

# Driving Force

The driving force behind cultural competency is

- population-based service delivery; i.e., knowing and understanding the people that you serve.
- appreciating the importance of culture, while avoiding stereotypes.
- understanding the socio-political influences that helped to shape your consumers' attitudes, beliefs and values.
- cultural awareness efforts are a part of a system-wide program within your organization. It is a process that is continually evolving.

# Challenges To Cultural and Linguistic Competency

- Ethnocentrism
- Prejudice
- Stereotypes
- Racism
- Discrimination

Being culturally competent means having the capacity to function effectively in another cultural context.

# Cultural and Linguistic Competency and Me: Where Am I?



# References

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