



CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS

Regional Center of Orange County
Board of Directors Training
July 10, 2025

Why are we talking about this?

Welfare and Institutions Code § 4622(g)(1) requires:

Regional centers provide necessary training and support to Board members to facilitate their understanding and participation, including issues relating to linguistic and cultural competency.



Introduction

The reason for today's conversation

- What is cultural competency/sensitivity/understanding, etc.
- Why is it important to talk about?
- How can we use this to improve our lives and the lives of those we connect, serve and interact with?

Thinking about your own story

- What is your “culture” and what does it mean to you?
- Why is this important to the work we do at Regional Center of Orange County?



Definition

CULTURE can be defined as all the ways of life of a population that are passed down from generation to generation.

This can include, but is not limited to:

- Codes of manners
- Dress
- Language
- Food
- Religion, rituals, ceremonies
- Festivals and holidays
- Art and architecture
- Norms

“A cultural group can be described as people with common origins, customs and styles of living, sense of identity or language. Their common experiences shape their values, goals, expectations, beliefs, perceptions and behaviors.”



The value of addressing linguistic and cultural competency

- To be responsive to communities with changing demographics
- To raise awareness of diverse views and beliefs about disability
- To ensure that individuals and families receive the services and supports they need
- To improve quality, effectiveness and satisfaction with services and supports

What is cultural sensitivity?

“I understand we’re different and that we may not see eye to eye on things.”

The general recognition that there are different cultures, and that cultural lens can impact how people may respond, react, and view a certain situation.



What is cultural competency?

...a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations. ~ Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

...the ability to understand, appreciate and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own. ~ American Psychological Association

...the ability of a person to effectively interact, work, and develop meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds.

... is a range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication with people of other cultures. ~ Wikipedia



Issues with “cultural competence”

Cultural competence also bears two main problems: It suggests that there is categorical knowledge a person could attain about a group of people, which leads to stereotyping and bias, and it denotes that there is an endpoint to becoming fully culturally competent.

Dr. Shamaila Khan, Ph.D.



Cultural humility

More than understanding...

Cultural humility involves understanding the complexity of identities — that even in sameness there is difference — and that a clinician (or anyone) will never be fully competent about the evolving and dynamic nature of a person's experiences.



What is linguistic competency?

Linguistic competence is the capacity of an organization and its personnel to communicate effectively and convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse audiences.

Culture and Language may Influence

- Wellness belief systems
- How disabilities are caused or perceived
- The behaviors of people seeking services or their attitudes towards providers
- The delivery of services by the provider who looks at the world through his or her own cultural and language



What are Cultural and Linguistically Appropriate Services ?

Services that are respectful of and responsive to cultural and linguistic needs.



How This Intersects With RCOC's Guiding Principles

Community Life

Persons served are in safe and supportive settings that promote a life of independence, acknowledge diverse cultural perspectives, and that respect the inherent risks and valuable learning experiences that come from living in the community.

Family Supports

Family support services are flexible and innovative in meeting the family's needs as they evolve over time, are tailored to the preferences of the individual family, and are consistent with their cultural norms and customs.

Early Intervention

Persons served are provided with needed services and supports in a family-focused and collaborative fashion.

Living Options

Culturally-sensitive services and supports are provided so that persons served can make informed choices on where and with whom they live, including owning or renting their own homes.

Service Planning and Coordination

Services and supports are sensitive to the diverse religious, cultural, language, socioeconomic and ethnic characteristics of persons served and their families' communities.

Administration and Governance

RCOC's staffing pattern reflects and is sensitive to the cultural and ethnic characteristics of its service areas.

The RCOC Board of Directors is representative of, and accountable to its stakeholders and the community it serves.



National Core Indicators (NCI) Data Points

RCOC Statistics

NCI over the years

NCI Survey and Year	Able to Contact SC When Wants	Satisfied with Services and Supports Currently Received	Services and Supports Have Made a Positive Difference	Services and Supports Help to Live a Good Life
Adult Family FY 21 / 22	85%	85%	94%	92%
Family Guardian FY 21 / 22	89%	92%	98%	99%
Child Family FY 21 / 22	83%	76%	94%	93%
Adult Family FY 19 / 20	90%	85%	95%	95%
Family Guardian FY 19 / 20	93%	93%	99%	99%
Child Family FY 18 / 19	89%	78%	95%	93%
Adult Family FY 16 / 17	89%	86%	88%	91%
Family Guardian FY 16 / 17	87%	92%	92%	96%
Child Family FY 15 / 16	85%	76%	93%	92%
Adult Family FY 13 / 14	86%	88%	92%	N/A
Family Guardian FY 13 / 14	93%	91%	96%	N/A
Child Family FY 12 / 13	80%	71%	92%	N/A

Questions & answers

Strength lies in differences, not in similarities.
~ Stephen R. Covey

