CULTURAL COMPETENCY
&
DIVERSITY PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Cultural competency refers to the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to all people, seeking to value and appreciate every culture, race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religious or political affiliation, age or generation, gender or sexual identity, socio-economic status, marital or parental status, family or social background, level of education and ability, physical, mental, or emotional health or disability, and other diversity factors including life experiences.

An effective cultural competency plan raises awareness and understanding of the many differences among people and enhances the commitment of leadership and staff toward affirming and protecting the dignity of every person. It encourages a compassionate and forgiving view of the human condition, and relies upon a continuous cycle of collaboration, education, and evaluation.

Adapt recognizes that persons served, stakeholders and employees have varying perspectives based on their unique cultural background. The organization strives to respect cultural differences, which are discussed in the agency's Cultural Competency training provided upon hire and annually thereafter. Diverse perspectives, values, styles, and beliefs are viewed as an asset to the organization's ability to provide quality services in a culturally aware manner. One's cultural perspective is based on the following primary and secondary dimensions and, according to the Veteran's Administration, is the filter for all communication:

Primary Dimensions

- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Gender Identification
- Disability
- Ethnic Heritage

Secondary Dimensions

- Education
- Work Experience
- Communication Style
- First Language
- Socioeconomic Status
- Geographic Location
- Family Status
- Organizational Role
- Religion
- Military Experience

Cultural Competence does not mean knowing everything about all different groups of people. This can be achieved by acknowledging and accepting the differences in cognitive, behavioral, philosophical, social, and communicative styles that arise from different cultural/generational contexts. In order to understand these differences, employees must seek to understand by asking for clarification of a behavior or perspective. An environment striving to achieve cultural competence is one where people respect the opinions of others, acknowledge differences without becoming defensive, are open to learning about other cultures and ideas, don't stereotype or judge others, understand that one's own culture isn't superior to others, and communicate effectively with others.

Adapt will strive to meet the culture-based needs of persons served, stakeholders, and employees through education provided on an ongoing and situational basis. Attempts to provide training and information in a different language will be made as the need arises, and translators are typically arranged through the local Community Mental Health (CMH) agency. Employees will be educated on the cultural differences of the person they are serving and/or stakeholders, as well as their co-workers. Adapt has Diversity training that is taught upon hire and annually. This curriculum will be updated periodically to remain relevant and reflective of the community in which Adapt exists and provides services. Adapt management will encourage employees, persons served, and stakeholders to express concerns and ideas regarding diversity education and promoting an inclusive culture.

Some demographic and cultural factors can be readily benchmarked, but others are not easy to identify or measure. For example, some disabilities are not obvious, and a person may not recognize or choose to disclose a condition as a disability. Sexual orientation, marital or parental status, and life experiences may not be apparent or easy to discern. Sometimes privacy concerns prevent full awareness of diversity elements. However, despite these challenges, our goal remains the same: to create an environment that challenges stereotypes, fosters collaborative relationships, and supports everyone.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish this goal, we use these tools:

- Assessment
- Implementation
- Improvement

ASSESSMENT

We assess the degree to which agency values and mission form the foundation for and are integrated into our daily operations and activities:

- Understand the role leaders play in developing and fostering an atmosphere of cultural competency; building trust and credibility; modeling agency values
- Self-awareness assessment for all employees
- Identify and evaluate any existing internal agency barriers to diversity and cultural competency
- Evaluate Training curriculum for cultural competency and inclusion
- Review all policies and procedure for cultural competency language and impact
- Review and revise Employee Handbook, Code of Ethics, Consumer handbook and program descriptions for commitment to cultural competency

IMPLEMENTATION

- Include emphasis on expanding Adapt's visibility in the community to increase our presence where diverse populations may likely be
- Focus on diversity and inclusiveness in leadership positions
- Include interview techniques to determine and develop cultural competency in hiring practices
- Employee education and training:
    - Include cultural competency in orientation and continuous supervisor training
    - Incorporate post-training assessment in Diversity Training and all classes
    - Consider outside resources to expand employee cultural competency awareness
    - Annual recipient rights training/review
- Require supervisors to take an active role
- Communicate our ongoing commitment through the internal newsletter and media postings
- Educate and enlighten the public about our mission to serve people with barriers to employment
- Actively engage diverse community groups; expand range of influence
- Inform and when possible, plan cultural celebrations
- Provide community resource information
- To the extent Adapt has input and control, ensure service plans and goals are developed collaboratively with the person served; actively address an individual's cultural needs and preferences when completing the Adapt pre-planning for in preparation for service plan meetings
- Translate agency documents and communications into other languages, as appropriate
- Seek input from all levels and facets of the organization to improve awareness and evaluate the impact of current efforts
- Annual review of the cultural competency plan, updating as needed

EVALUATION/IMPROVEMENT: Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: ***Assess and evaluate current levels of Cultural Competency and Diversity*****.**

In order to assure cultural competency and diversity at all levels of the organization and among our stakeholders, communities and persons served, Adapt will continuously evaluate our internal culture as an agency, an employer, a service provider, and a community partner.

Measured by employee, stakeholder, consumer, and community satisfaction surveys; use of self-assessment tools

Objectives for Goal 1	**Responsibility**	**Frequency/ Completion Date**
Update the annual Stakeholder, Employee, and Consumer Satisfaction Surveys to reflect a desire to gain information regarding inclusiveness and cultural competency – 1st Revision with Diversity perspective	Program Excellence Advocate	5/1/2024
Increase visibility in the community through participation in community activities that draw diverse populations of people (Fairs, festivals, etc.)	Human Resources & Administrative Personnel	Continuous
Review all policies and procedures through the lens of cultural competency to assess language and impact	Administrative Personnel	Annually
Review employee and consumer handbooks and program descriptions for commitment to cultural competency	Executive Director, Program Excellence Advocate	Annually
Examine and evaluate internal agency cultural norms for barriers to diversity and cultural competency and be mindful of casual conversations	Administrative Personnel	Continuous
Evaluate programs, services, and opportunities for accessibility and applicability	Program Excellence Advocate & Directors of Services	October & April (Bi-Annually)
Review Strategic plan for commitment to agency values, cultural competency, and diversity	Administrative Personnel	October & April (Bi-Annually)
Model values and desired culture; challenge assumptions, biases, and prejudices; understand the role of leaders in fostering an atmosphere of openness and trust	Administrative Personnel	Continuous
Review and assess PTO and vacation practices for cultural awareness and inclusion	Executive Director	Annually
Evaluate agency outcomes for effective commitment to diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency	Administrative Personnel	Annually

Goal 2: ***Collaborate to develop and foster enhanced commitment to Cultural Competency and Diversity.***

Adapt will maintain an effective cultural competency plan which raises awareness and understanding of the many differences among people and enhances the commitment of leadership and employees toward affirming and protecting the dignity of every person.

Measured by increased representation of diversity at all levels of the organization, including governance; policies, procedures, handbooks and other agency documents and practices which reflect cultural awareness and sensitivity

Objectives for Goal 2	**Responsibility**	**Frequency/ Completion Date**
Obtain the most current demographic information for Branch and St. Joseph Counties.	Program Excellence Advocate	2/1/2024
Translate agency documents and communications as appropriate	Administrative Personnel	Continuously
Expand Diversity/Cultural Competency training • expand new employee training • develop supervisor training that places greater emphasis on Cultural Competency • utilize internal and external trainers/resources	Training Coordinator	Continuously
Communicate ongoing commitment: newsletter, CEO updates, presentations, etc.	Executive Director & Designee	Continuously
Inform and when possible, plan cultural celebrations	Administrative Personnel	Continuously
Develop current and accessible community resource information	Program Excellence Advocate	6/30/2024
Utilize committees, as needed, to complete projects and initiatives related to Cultural Competency	Executive Director	Continuously
Review and revise Adapt's Pre-Planning form utilized in preparation for service/treatment plan meetings	Program Excellence Advocate & Executive Director	10/1/2023
When completing the Adapt pre-planning form, actively address an individual's cultural needs and preferences; advocate for inclusion of preferences in service plans with CMH personnel	Home and Program Supervisors & Directors of Community Services	Continuously

Goal 3: ***Review, evaluate and update the Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan to ensure effectiveness and relevance.***

We will review and revise the Cultural Competency and Diversity plan annually, making updates as needed to ensure it is effective and relevant.

Measured by analysis of plan effectiveness through benchmarking and competency-based training results; evaluation of the degree to which diverse individuals and groups feel included and respected

Objectives for Goal 3	**Responsibility**	**Frequency/ Completion Date**
Regular review of the cultural competency plan, updating as needed	Executive Director	Annually
Seek input from all levels and facets of the organization and community to improve awareness and evaluate the impact of current efforts	Administrative Personnel	Continuously
Utilize employee and stakeholder surveys to measure impact and improvement	Program Excellence Advocate & Executive Director	Continuously
Assess and evaluate agency outcomes for commitment to diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency	Executive Director	Semi-annually

9/19/2023