



Examples for Practicing Cultural Competence

The first step in practicing cultural competence is recognizing where you and your organization are in terms of your understanding of cultural competence and cultural humility. We can sometimes unintentionally end up causing additional harm if we do not take the time to make sure we are prepared to serve marginalized populations before beginning our outreach.

- This article has some helpful tips for creating culturally competent organizations: [Chapter 27. Working Together for Racial Justice and Inclusion | Section 7. Building Culturally Competent Organizations | Main Section](#)
- It can be really helpful for organizations to set aside some funds to provide a yearly cultural competence training for staff
 - Write this into your grants, apply for grants that want to target underserved populations. Many grants are available to provide you funding to build this into your organizational capacity while simultaneously building relationships for sustainability!
- Make sure your organization gives space for staff members who may hold marginalized identities to share their experiences and have a seat at the table; remember, when we center marginalized voices, all others benefit.
- Believe your staff members and clients who are sharing their lived experiences with you, even if it's different than your own lived experiences.
 - Be sure to give folks time and space to process what may be happening in their communities.
 - For example, If there is a limit to the number/ time of check-ins with staff, consider extending or lessening this time when meeting after an event that may have directly impacted them or the communities they're a part of, this is an example of trauma informed supervision (i.e. instead of an hour, do an hour and 15 minutes. Let the staff check in about their feelings, ask is there anything you can do to support their well being, then begin your work related supervision piece), or
 - if it is a client, providing more time to utilize your services (is there a limit to the number of times you call past clients to check in? Can you increase the limit?)



Examples when wanting to improve services for the Latinx or non- english speaking community

- if you're trying to improve services to the Latinx community:
 - Do you have all of your resources available in Spanish?
 - Do you have multiple bilingual advocates?
 - Or have access to a language line (like NCCASA's).
 - Do you use language that is immigrant supportive (not saying things like "illegal" or referring to people as "aliens"),
 - Do you have barriers to using services like requiring a SSN, proof of citizenship (like for therapeutic services)?
 - Does your staff have access to the "I Speak.." Flash Card? If not, download and print for staff by clicking this link: [I Speak Flash Card](#)
 - Additionally, you can get some "[All are Welcomed Here](#)" signs in other languages, by clicking the link and scrolling to the "Outreach Materials" header.

Examples when wanting to improve services for the trans/ non- binary community

- Does the language that you use in your pamphlets or on your website, etc only include she/ he pronouns? Try using gender neutral language such as: they/ them or just using general terms like: "individuals"
- When providing medical advocacy, are the clothes that you provide victims/ survivors only women's clothes/ sizes? Make sure you have clothes for male identified survivors as well and men's sizes. See if you can put together or have donated make-up kits that you also bring to the hospital after a hospital visit for trans women whose make- up may have come off and they'd like to reapply before leaving the hospital
- Do you have gender neutral bathrooms/ bathroom signs? Can you designate a bathroom in your agency to be gender neutral? Are bathroom signs coverable by your grants' funds?
- Do you provide on- going training for staff? Can you place your pronouns in your email signature or train staff (particularly new staff members) to use their pronouns when introducing themselves to clients?
 - Do NOT use words like "preferred" pronouns. Simply say "I am _____ and my pronouns are ___/___ and would you like to disclose yours?"

Examples when wanting to improve services for the LGBTQ community

- If you have pictures on your website or in your informational flyers, the images should be reflective of all kinds of relationships, not just heterosexual couples.
- Provide support groups for LGBTQ communities and advertise along with the rest of your programming.



Examples when wanting to improve services for people who are differently abled

- Be sure your organization offers accessibility assistance like ASL interpreters when possible, and has closed captioning enabled on all video materials. If a survivor/victim has an intellectual or developmental disability, are your advocates trained to match their language? Are they trained to follow disability etiquette with physically disabled individuals, like explaining who is in the room to a blind person or meeting someone who is in a wheelchair at eye level when speaking to them?
- Do you know where your TTY machine is? Do you have one at all?
- This is a great all-around toolkit with tips and resources surrounding work with disabled survivors/victims: <https://www.nsvrc.org/sarts/toolkit/6-6>

Additional Resources:

5 minute video- Cultural Humility - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16dSeyLSOKw>

3 minute video- Light hearted video about promoting stereotypes- [What kind of Asian are you?](#)

General tips when thinking about culturally competent practices

- Know Yourself: Self-Awareness
- Acknowledge cultural differences
- Know other Cultures – “other” awareness
- Identify and avoid Stereotypes – not always easy!
- Empathize with people from other cultures
- Adapt rather than adopt – make adjustments and Compromise
- Acquire recovery skills- it is okay not to know or make a mistake, do not dwell. Simply apologize and move

Most of all, remember it is impossible to know it all, but a commitment to continual learning, education and engagement, will provide you with a foundation for improving your cultural practice.

“To be culturally competent doesn’t mean you are an authority in the values and beliefs of every culture. What it means is that you hold a deep respect for cultural differences and are eager to learn, and willing to accept, that there are many ways of viewing the world.”

- Okokon O. Udo