

Cultural Competency Resource Packet

**Center for School Mental Health Assistance
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Introduction

This resource packet is intended to provide a brief overview of issues relevant to school mental health personnel seeking to develop cultural competency. Additionally, this packet will assist those attempting to familiarize themselves with some of the available resources and references pertaining to this issue.

Overview

Researchers have been aware for some time now that the demographic changes that took place in the United States during the last half of the 20th century would transform the nation into an increasingly more heterogeneous place. It was predicted that in the new millennium, native-born Whites would become just another group within the diverse racial and ethnic peoples living in the United States (Cox, 1993).

It should therefore come as no surprise that the nation's schools are amongst the first areas to be effected by these changes. Schools have always served as a barometer for measuring the demographic changes taking place in the society at large (Johnson, 1995). Recent years have highlighted rising numbers reporting as students of color, biracial, and immigrant (Nishimura, 1995). Unfortunately, many of these students have suffered under a public school system that was not prepared and poorly equipped to address their needs. Evidence of this fact can be found in the alarmingly high dropout rates among many students of color, especially in urban environments (Cummings, 1990).

Schools require additional support to insure that all students, not just students of color, succeed academically and can develop emotionally and psychologically. All students require a safe and affirming environment where diversity is valued in order to learn and grow. A viable solution can be found through Expanded School Mental Health (ESMH) programs which augment traditional services offered by a school's mental health staff (e.g. guidance counselors, psychologists and social workers) and link schools to community mental health centers, health departments and other social services.

Given the growing diversity of the student population, counseling across cultures has become a core competency that all ESMH providers need to develop. It is essential that school mental health workers pursue the training necessary to become multiculturally competent and assist in implementing culturally appropriate policies in their schools. In doing so, ESMH providers send an important message about inclusiveness and sensitivity to students, parents, administrators and other staff.

Culturally Competent Counselors

Most conceptualizations of multicultural competence come from the seminal work first presented by Sue and his colleagues (1982) and later revised by Sue, Arrendon and McDavis (1992). These articles provided a view of multicultural competence that incorporated three primary areas: multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. Johnson (1995) expanded upon Sue's work by creating a more detailed conceptualization

model. In it he identified six core competencies necessary to effectively counsel across cultures:

1. Acquiring appreciation, knowledge, and understanding of cultural groups, especially those individuals and communities that have been historically underserved and/or underrepresented by the counseling profession.
2. Increasing content knowledge about important culturally related terms and concepts such as racial identity, acculturation, worldview.
3. Enhancing awareness of one's own biases and cultural assumptions, and assessing one's own multicultural skills and comfort level.
4. Developing the ability to use that knowledge and self-awareness to make more culturally sensitive and appropriate interventions.
5. Developing an awareness of the interpersonal dynamics that occur within a multicultural dyad.
6. Deconstructing the cultural assumptions underlying the counseling process.

Experts agree that multicultural competence is a necessary prerequisite to effective, affirming, and ethical work in counseling. Reynolds (1999) wrote that cultural competence can be defined as the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to counsel effectively and ethically across cultural differences. The awareness of these diverse components is what allows counseling professionals to assess the development of their own multicultural aptitude.

Culturally Competent Schools

Johnson (1995) developed the following four-phase model for implementing culturally competent school initiatives: formulate an integrated plan; conduct a needs assessment; design and implement program interventions; and conduct ongoing assessment. It was also recommended that schools create a Multicultural Advisory Counsel (MAC). The chief task of the MAC would be to identify and prioritize issues of diversity in the school needing attention. With the support of the school administration, the MAC could be employed to develop a comprehensive needs assessment strategy. The evaluation of perceptions, expectations, and experiences of all members of the school environment is crucial to meaningful goal setting and school functioning (Reynolds, 1999). ESMH providers can assume a leadership role in this process and act as catalysts for change.

Johnson (1995) also identified 10 areas counselors agreed were necessary interventions which could be included in any multicultural initiative. These include:

1. Culturally responsive counseling
2. Human relations training
3. Orientation and transitional services for newcomer students
4. Conflict resolution and peer mediation programs
5. Small group counseling
6. Bibliotherapy
7. Classroom guidance
8. In-service training
9. Evaluation appraisal and advisement material

10. Parent education.

Helping to develop multiculturally sensitive academic environments fall within the immediate roles and responsibilities of school-based practitioners. ESMH providers should regularly be assessing the manner in which issues of race and ethnicity are being addressed within their schools.

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CSMHA Articles

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Baker-Sinclair, M.E., Weist, M.D., & Ptroff, H.J. (1996). Language and rapport in cognitive behavioral therapy with African-American teenagers. The Behavior Therapist, 19, 118-119.

Garrison, E.G., Roy, I.S., & Azar, V. (1999) Responding to the mental health needs of Latino children and families through school-based services. Clinical Psychology Review, 19, 199-220.

Resources and Organizations

International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology

The aims of the Association are to facilitate communication among persons interested in a diverse range of issues involving the intersection of culture and psychology.

www.iaccp.org

Center for Cross-Cultural Behavioral Pediatric Health

Agency whose mission is to increase the capacity of health care professionals to reach ethnic minority and poor children (primarily poor Hispanic/Latino, African American and Asian) and to prevent and treat the learning barriers created by health related problems which include, but, are not limited to youth violence, drug use and medical, learning and emotional disorders.

www.unt.edu/pediatric

National Center for Cultural Competence

The mission of the National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) is to increase the capacity of health care and mental health programs to design, implement and evaluate culturally and linguistically competent service delivery systems.

www.gucdc.georgetown.edu/ncc

Cross-Cultural Health Care Program

Since 1992, the CCHCP has been addressing broad cultural issues that impact the health of individuals and families in ethnic minority communities in Seattle and nationwide.

www.xculture.org

Office of Minority Health Resource Center

The mission of OMH is to improve the health of racial and ethnic populations through the development of effective health policies and programs that help to eliminate disparities in health.

www.omhrc.gov

Diversity Rx:

Organization promoting language and cultural competence to improve the quality of health care for minority, immigrant, and ethnically diverse communities.

www.diversityrx.org

Transcultural Mental Health Centre

Established in 1993 as a statewide service. Promotes access to mental health services for people of non-English speaking background (NESB). The Center also works with consumers, carers, health professionals and the community to encourage positive attitudes to mental health.

www.tmhc.nsw.gov.au

CulturedMed

A web site promoting culturally-competent health care for refugees and immigrants. The library also houses a research center containing relevant print materials

www.sunyit.edu/library/html/culturedmed

World Federation for Mental Health

An international non-profit advocacy organization founded in 1948 to advance, among all peoples and nations, the prevention of mental and emotional disorders, the proper treatment and care of those with such disorders, and the promotion of mental health

www.wfmh.com

American Counseling Association

A not-for-profit, professional and educational organization that is dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession. Founded in 1952, ACA is the world's largest association exclusively representing professional counselors.

www.counseling.org

American Psychological Association

Based in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States. With more than 159,000 members, APA is also the largest association of psychologists worldwide.

www.apa.org

Center for Multicultural Human Services

A non-profit organization staffed by multi-ethnic, multilingual social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, education specialists, art therapists and graduate interns from local universities. CMHS offers a broad range of mental health, social, educational, health and language services geared to the unique values and characteristics of individuals and families from diverse cultures.

www.cmhsweb.org

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DiversityWorks

For-profit agency. Offering mental health professional's continuing education workshops. Multicultural training for educators and mental health professionals.

www.diversityworksusa.com