



National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems

Cultural Competence: What it Means for Person-Centered Thinking, Planning, and Practice

Summary of a webinar from October 29, 2019

Introduction

This webinar was the 2nd in a 4 -part series on cultural competence. The speakers on the webinar shared:

- A plan for cultural competence at the personal and organizational levels.
- A “real life” example of an organization that values & practices cultural competence.
- Personal stories on what culturally competent services mean to them.
- How cultural competence & person-centered thinking & practice are linked.

What is Cultural Competence?

Cultural competence is what organizations and their staff do to make sure they are welcoming and can serve all people no matter who they are, how old they are, where they live, what languages they speak, how they communicate, and how they get around. It means knowing how your own culture feeds your attitudes, beliefs, and actions. It also means learning about and respecting cultural differences and gaining skills to work with people from other cultures.

Elements of Cultural Competence

Organizations that want to achieve cultural competence have a number of things in common including a mission, values, policies, practices, staff, budgets, and partnerships with communities and individuals that are open to culture and language.

Things people can do:

- Know that cultures can be different
- Understand your own culture
- Be mindful of your actions
- Learn about culture
- Understand people act through their culture

Things organizations can do:

- Value diversity
- Assess themselves
- Track how culture is changing
- Have culturally competent polices/practices
- Change when they need to



Personal Stories

Diana talked about her personal experience as a person of Cajun and Houma background and as the parent of adopted adult children from a wide variety of backgrounds. She talked about how the SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, which she co-directs, weaves together cultural and linguistic competence and family and person-centeredness in its work with families of youth birth to 26.

Christie is a person with cerebral palsy and a member of the LGBT community. She finds it difficult to manage the personal care system and the insurance system while working full time. Many programs don't work for her because she has a job. She is her own advocate and an "out-of-the-box" thinker. She says moving toward person centered thinking is good, but it's important to expand our worldview to reach more people.

Brenda Liz is a parent of a young man who understands more than one language and who doesn't communicate with words. She talked about the activities of the Latino Community of Practice, which are person-centered, family-centered, and community centered.

Lorraine talked about understanding tribal people and their beliefs and customs. We must meet them where they are to serve them. Every tribe is uniquely different. There are over 500 different tribes in North America. It takes time to understand the tribes in your state and local area.

Cultural Competence and Person-Centered Thinking and Practice

Practices that support cultural competence and person-centered thinking should not be separate. All human beings including those with disabilities are shaped by their cultural backgrounds. People are the experts of their own lives. To be culturally competent, you must understand your own culture. We must learn about other cultures.

Diana says, "You can only practice person-centered planning if you practice cultural competency – and you can only practice cultural competency with your heart."



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You can watch the webinar and view the slides here: <https://ncapps.acl.gov/Webinars.html>

The speakers on this webinar were:



Tawara Goode is Director of the Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. She is also the Director of the National Center for Cultural Competence with a mission to increase the capacity of health care and mental health care programs to design, implement, and evaluate culturally and linguistically competent service delivery systems to address growing diversity, persistent disparities, and to promote health and mental health equity.



Brenda Liz Muñoz is an Executive Committee Member with the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities and a Community Services Specialist in the Center for Leadership in Disability at Georgia State University. She co-leads a diverse, multi-sector consortium of professionals, families, and allies which focuses on: capacity building and collective impact; Latino parent education and leadership training; and advocacy in policy and systems of care. She is a proud parent of a nonverbal young man who lives with severe to profound autism spectrum disorders.



Christie Carter is the Older Adult Program Coordinator at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center. She has a Masters of Education with a focus on instructional design and is part of both the LGBT and disability communities. She uses her personal experiences in both of these groups to educate policymakers and advocate for the older adults she works with every day.



Diana Autin is Co-Director of the SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, New Jersey's "one-stop" for families, and the FV Leadership in Family Professional Partnerships. She directs the National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE), which advocates to enhance the voice of diverse families and family-led organizations at decision-making tables. She is of Cajun and Native American heritage and is the adoptive mother of four adult children from diverse cultures – she is deeply committed to cultural reciprocity and language access.



Lorraine Davis is a member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe, and the Founder and Executive Director of the Native American Development Center, a Native American-governed nonprofit located in Bismarck, ND. The center's person and family-centered model addresses socio-cultural and economic challenges that inhibit Native American's ability to improve their lives for themselves and their children. It was designed in response to the cultural dissonance Lorraine encountered upon first moving to Bismarck from a reservation as a single-parent when she had no money and an alcohol addiction. She is a current Ed.D student in Education Leadership and Administration.