

Cultural Competence – A Practical Path to Access & Disparity Reduction

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Cultural Diversity

- Refers to the unique characteristics that all of us possess that distinguish us as individuals and identify us as belonging to a group or groups
- Diversity goes beyond concepts of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, religion, sexual orientation & identity, disability and age
- Diversity offers strength and richness to the whole (Hastings Institute)



DoH Vision for Primary Health Care

- Recognizes need for primary health care services that value and respond to the cultural, racial and spiritual experiences of individuals, families and communities.
- Requires that equity of access be established for those who face barriers



Nova Scotia's Response: ***Diversity & Social Inclusion Initiative*** 3 year initiative, concluded in March 06

- Lead in raising awareness of diversity & social inclusion issues in Primary Health Care
- To consult with stakeholders including diverse populations to develop guidelines and policies



What we heard from Stakeholders

Themes - relate to health disparities & inequities,
quality of care & need for a culturally competent
PHC system

1. Under-Screening
2. Data Collection with race, ethnicity & language identifiers
3. Cultural Health Interpretation
4. Cultural Competence



Diversity & Social Inclusion (D&SI) Outcomes

- The Diversity and Social Inclusion Initiative resulted in recommendations for culturally inclusive policies and the first provincial guidelines for cultural competence in primary health care in Canada



Cultural Competence in Health Care

- A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or amongst professionals and enable that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations

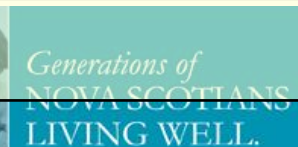
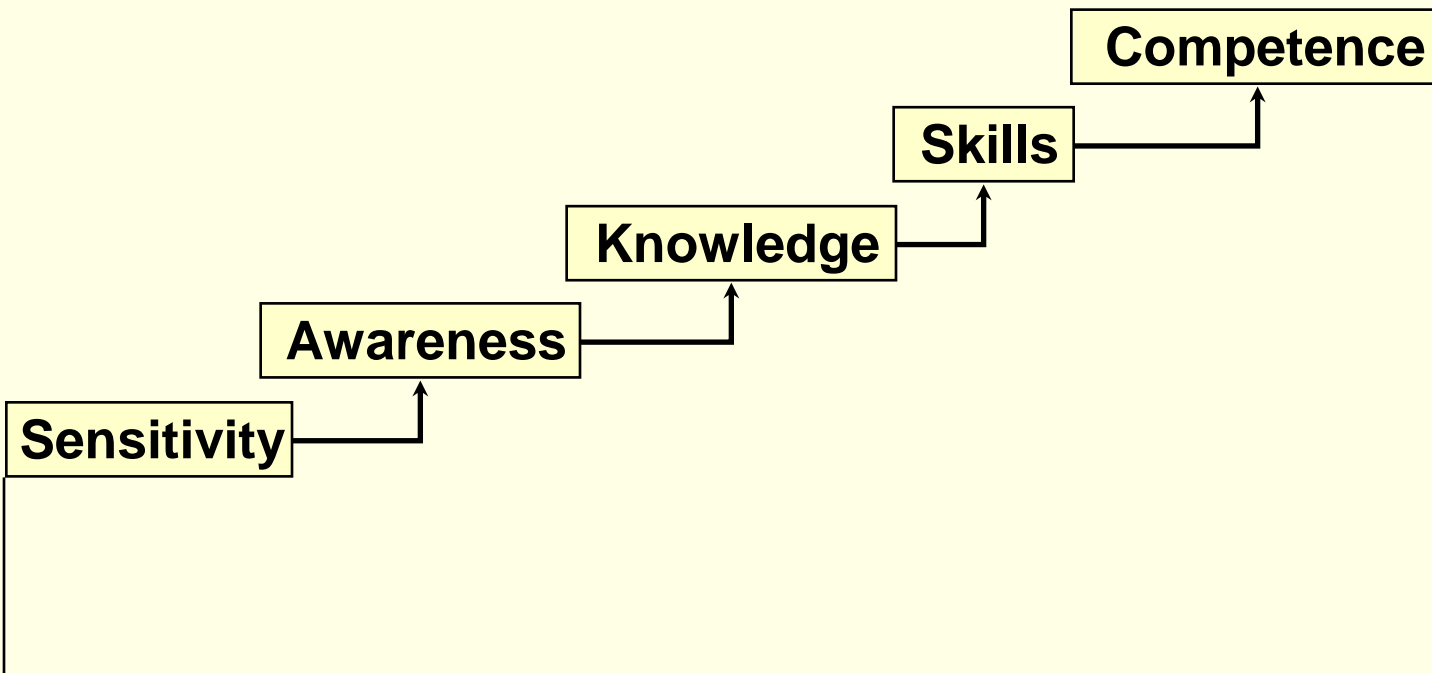
Cross et al (1989)

Government “user friendly” version

Cultural Competence means having the attitudes, awareness, knowledge, skills & policies to better meet the needs of all the people we serve



Cultural Competence is a process:



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Cultural Competence Tools

- Ed. Resources: CC Guidelines, CC Guide for PHC Professionals & DVD/Discussion Guide Available at

<http://www.healthteamnovascotia.ca/health/inclusive.html>

Remember, cultural competence is a journey not a destination (but standing still is not an option)



Cultural Competence Guidelines in Primary Health Care, NS

4 Themes

- Cultural Competence Training
- Cultural Health Interpretation
- Data with race, ethnicity, language (culture) self identification
- Screening for Chronic Diseases in under-screened populations, disproportionately affected

*Also recruitment & retention of diverse providers & employees at all levels of the health system



Application in Cancer Care

- Access
- Approach
- Accountability

How?

- Provide care/service with a culturally specific orientation
- Recognize & respond to significant impact of cultural values, differences and beliefs, power & hierarchy



Having a diverse looking staff does not mean having a culturally competent staff.

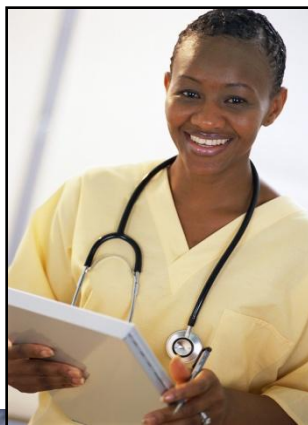
‘Diverse staff’ and ‘culturally competent staff’ are distinct concepts

one addresses appearance, the other addresses behavior.



“An inclusive organization not only recognizes diversity but also embodies it.”

Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, 2004



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Cultural Competence in Health Care

Encourages a dialogue between health professionals, the health system and the public which supports insight into addressing the disparities in the health status of populations



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Yes, There is a Business Case

- 1. To be competitive provincially nationally & globally we have to address diversity – Cultural Competence enables this
- 2. To reduce health disparities & inequities, we have to *reach* marginalized people – Cultural Competence supports this
- 3. To benefit from different perspectives, policy & care options we must attract & retain diverse people – Cultural Competence foundational
- It is also a practical path to social justice



Update: Change/Integration Indicators

- The DoH Mission contains “diversity” language
- The Physician’s Master Agreement contains cultural competence language in the preamble
- The Health DM -letter of encouragement to Continuing Care Leaders about the 2 objectives:
 - building a diverse health workforce
 - building systemic cultural
- The DoH has 1st Diversity Committee with mandate & budget to support the 2 objectives.
 - The DoH Physician Advisor is Executive Sponsor & has responsibility for Quality Framework
- The provincial Diversity Round Table has influenced & delivered the provincial Employment Equity Policy (Oct. 1, 08)
- The Equity Policy names CC & encourages the use of trained Selection Panelists from designated groups in the hiring process





“Adding wings to caterpillars does not create butterflies-it creates awkward and dysfunctional caterpillars. Butterflies are created through transformation...”

Stephanie Marshal

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