



CULTURAL COMPETENCY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION PLAN

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BLUE RIVER SERVICES, INC.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN

Despite similarities, fundamental differences among people arise from such cultural factors as nationality, ethnicity, acculturation, language, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, and age, as well as factors attributed to family and individual experiences. These differences affect the service beliefs and behaviors of both individuals served and those of us who provide services. They also influence the expectations that individuals and providers have of each other. Blue River Services, Inc. (BRS) recognizes that the delivery of high-quality services and supports requires us to have a deeper understanding of individuals, their families, staff and the environments in which they live.

Policy Statement

Our agencies embrace cultural competence as a combination of behaviors, attitudes, policies, values and principles that enable us to interact effectively with people of different cultures. BRS defines cultural competence as a level of knowledge-based skills required to provide effective care/supervision for the people we serve regardless of a particular ethnic or racial group, personal differences and backgrounds. Operationally, we take into account a person's cultural background, cultural beliefs, and values, and incorporate these factors in a way that enhances how services are delivered.

Definitions

Culture – The life patterns, language, and beliefs of a group of people. Culture consists of ideals, values, and assumptions about life that are widely shared among the members. It is the major way in which human beings adapt to their environment and give meaning to their lives.

Cultural Competency – The word culture is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communication, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. Competence means that a person has the capacity to successfully function within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior as defined by the group.

Culture as a Process

BRS believes that cultural competence is a process, not an end point. As people become increasingly aware of the cultures in our environment, their services will be tailored in ways that do not require processes and planning. An organization which is fully culturally competent is continuously evolving in their understanding.

BRS Assumptions Regarding Cultural Competency

- All employees should be provided with information about cultural diversity.
- One culture is not better than another; they are just different.
- Cultures change slowly over time.
- Culture has an important influence on an individual's response to service.
- Each individual has the right to be respected for his or her cultural heritage.
- Employees need both cultural-general and cultural-specific information in order to provide culturally sensitive and competent services.
- Employees who can assess, plan, intervene and evaluate in a culturally competent manner will improve the quality of service delivery and positive outcomes.
- Prejudices and biases can be minimized with cultural understanding.
- Cultural awareness improves self-awareness.
- The agency is committed to fostering inclusion, tolerance and respect for diversity in all forms.

Goals

- Raise the consciousness of the organization regarding culture and diversity by recognizing the need for ongoing training, dialogue, and feedback.
- Improve communication to and for individuals for whom cultural and/or linguistic issues are present.
- Improve employee and leadership's understanding and sensitivity to cultural diversity through ongoing education and exposure.
- Ensure service quality and equity for all individuals seeking services.

The Human Resources Director and CEO will have the overall responsibility for cultural competence. The BRS Leadership teams will serve as the advisory committee to oversee cultural competence initiatives.

Helpful resources:

- <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/why-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-matter-nonprofits>
- <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/>
- <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/>
- <https://www.hrc.org/resources>

Planned Activities to Enhance Cultural Competency:

1. Ensure that leadership/personnel are educated and acknowledge the value of the diverse cultural and linguistic differences in the organization and the population they serve.
2. Provide a framework for employees to learn concepts and characteristics of culture by training employees at new hire orientation and annually on cultural competency, diversity and inclusion.
3. Provide ongoing exposure to employees throughout the year by providing additional educational videos/motivational stories through the online training system.
4. Advocate and raise awareness for cultural competence in the broader community by sharing educational literature, videos and general exposure on the agency website and other social media on an ongoing basis.
5. Strive for staff composition that reflects the demographics of our community by annually reviewing the EEO-1 data compared to local demographics and build recruiting efforts accordingly.
6. Identify individuals that have potential cultural, age, gender, or linguistic needs to determine which alternate communication methods or service treatment plans are required.
7. Determine that the appropriate processes and tools are available to meet the unique communication and language barriers that exist in the population.
8. Actively strive for a productive work environment that is free of harassment and bullying.