



**COMMUNITY
MENTAL HEALTH**

Cultural Competency Plan

2023

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Mission Statement

Community Mental Health of Ottawa County partners with people with mental illness, intellectual/developmental disabilities, substance use disorders and the broader community to improve lives and be a premier mental health agency in Michigan.

Table of Contents

- Mission Statement**..... 2
- Introduction**..... 3
- Key Concepts**..... 4
- Demographics**..... 5
- Guiding Principles** 6
 - Cultural Competency**..... 6
 - Linguistic Competency** 7
- Goals**..... 8
 - Review of 2022 Goals** 8
 - 2023 Goals**..... 9
- Summary**..... 9
- Bibliography** 10

Introduction

Culture is often defined as the shared traditions, beliefs, behaviors, values, customs, history, folklore, and institutions of a group of people. Culture is commonly shared by people of the same ethnicity, language, nationality, or religion. It is a system of rules that are the basis of what individuals are and how they express themselves individually and as part of a group. Culture plays a critical role in how people perceive mental illness, disability, and substance use disorders; whether or not and how they seek treatment; what treatments are sought; whether there are existing supports; and which treatment regimen might be most effective in achieving desired outcomes. It is well documented disparities exist in mental health services across the many facets comprising culture; with minority populations experiencing inferior quality of treatment, less access to needed services, and higher attrition rates.

Removing barriers and eliminating disparities in healthcare and mental health service provision begins with a commitment to the research and development of culturally sensitive, culturally aware, and responsive organizations that reflect and respect the cultural perspectives of their communities. When successful, these organizations recognize and embrace differences as enriching to, rather than threatening of, shared goals.

As defined by the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, cultural competency is:

“culturally and linguistically appropriate services respectful of and responsive to the health beliefs, practices and needs of diverse patients. The percentage of Americans who are racial and ethnic minorities and who speak a primary language other than English continues to grow rapidly. Organizations are looking to meet the challenges of serving diverse communities and provide high quality services and care. By tailoring services to an individual's culture and language preference, health professionals can help bring about positive health outcomes for diverse populations.” (Cultural Linguistic Competency, 2019)

Recognizing the importance of cultural differences and committing to the research and development of cultural competency and diversity allows an organization to:

- Increase efficacy at every level of the treatment cycle, including outreach, initial contact assessment, and initial and ongoing treatment
- Achieve better health outcomes by addressing the social determinants of health
- Increase trust among the community, agency, and staff
- Attract, hire, and retain a diverse workforce and board
- Create an inclusive, accommodating, and welcoming workspace and service provision
- Appreciate the diversity of human dynamics

While cultural competence is critical in service delivery and provision, it is equally important in the interactions among employees. Without appropriate cultural proficiency and understanding, interactions between co-workers can negatively impact the workplace environment. At Community Mental Health of Ottawa County (CMHOC), developing one's own cultural competency begins with employee orientation and continues throughout employment with ongoing training and learning opportunities.

CMHOC is dedicated to creating a culturally diverse workforce and being responsive to the needs and expectations of consumers, stakeholders, and staff by building a framework where systems and individuals interact and exist in an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance. It is the intent of this plan to assess current conditions, identify and address barriers in service provision, and develop a

range of initiatives meant to improve outcomes for persons from diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences.

Key Concepts

Culture: The conceptual system that structures the way people view the world: it is the particular set of beliefs, norms, and values that influence ideas about the nature of relationships, the way people live their lives, and the way people organize their world.

Cultural Awareness: The developing of empathy and understanding in relation to another ethnic group. This usually involves changes in terms of attitudes and values.

Cultural Humility: A process of lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique to address the power imbalances between individuals providing services and those receiving services.

Cultural Proficiency: Involves a deep and rich knowledge of a culture—an insider’s view—that allows staff to accurately interpret the subtle meanings of cultural behavior.

Cultural Sensitivity: Being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and influence values, learning, and behavior.

Ethnocentrism: The tendency to view one’s own culture as best and to judge the behavior and beliefs of culturally different people by one’s own standards.

Health Disparity: A particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. The factors leading to these differences include, but are not limited to:

- Racial or ethnic group
- Religion
- Socioeconomic status
- Gender
- Age
- Mental health
- Cognitive, sensory, or physical disabilities
- Sexual orientation or gender identity
- Geographic location
- Other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion

Linguistic Competency: The capacity of an agency to communicate effectively and convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse audiences. This includes but is not limited to persons with limited English proficiency, those who have low or no literacy skills, individuals with disabilities, individuals with visual impairments, and those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Demographics

CMHOC strives to provide culturally aware and linguistically competent supports and services to a diverse population. According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau data estimates (ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2022), the racial and/or ethnic composition of Ottawa County is:

- White, not Hispanic or Latinx—83.0%
- Hispanic or Latinx—10.4%
- Black or African American—2%
- Asian—2.9%
- Two or more races—2.1%
- American Indian or Alaska Native—0.6%
- Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander—0.1%

From our 2022 Cultural Competency plan, there has been an overall slight increase in diverse populations living in Ottawa County as shown by the table below. Previously, White—non-Hispanic nor Latinx were 83.4%, Hispanic or Latinx were 10.2%, Asian were 3%, Black or African American were 1.9%, American Indian or Alaska Native were 0.6%, two or more races were 2.0%, and other wasn't reported.

	White	Hispanic/ Latinx	Black	Asian	Two or more races	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Other
FY 2022	83.0%	10.4%	2%	2.9%	2.1%	0.6%	0.1%	N/A
FY 2021	83.4%	10.2%	1.9%	3%	2%	0.6%	0.1%	N/A

CMHOC is continually committed to promoting cultural competency within our organization, hiring processes, and services provided.

Guiding Principles

To address a diverse and changing population, CMHOC has identified the following guiding principles to direct and reinforce efforts at developing and providing culturally aware and responsive mental health services.

Cultural Competency

Developing a responsiveness to and empathy for the cultural needs of diverse populations is an ongoing process that requires transparency, trust, and continual self-reflection. Cultural Competency requires:

- A defined set of values, principles, attitudes, policies, structures, and a demonstration of behaviors that enable people to work effectively in cross-cultural situations; and
- A commitment to (1) valuing diversity; (2) engaging in ongoing self-assessment; (3) managing the dynamics of diversity; (4) acquiring and promoting cultural knowledge and empathy; and (5) adapting to the diversity and the cultural contexts of the community.

CMHOC has developed the following standards to ensure culturally competent supports and services:

- Initial and ongoing (annual) cultural competency training for all staff and network providers;
 - Native American Culture Training – Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi (Required at Staff Orientation)
 - Military Culture Training led by the Veteran Navigator at the LRE. (Required at Staff Orientation)
- Staff are informed of cultural resources and encouraged to participate in cultural trainings available in Ottawa and nearby counties.
 - Crucial Conversations for Supervisors—which teaches skills for creating alignment and agreement by fostering open dialogue around high-stakes, emotional or risky topics at all levels of Ottawa County
 - Staff had a training on Veteran and Military Culture facilitated by the Lakeshore Regional Entity’s Veteran Navigator on August 31, 2022 and September 29, 2022.
 - Staff had a training on Native American Culture facilitated by the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi on February 9, 2023.
- Organizational policies regarding equal employment opportunities, treatment of consumers by spiritual means, clinician conflict of care due to cultural values and/or religious beliefs, and recipient rights
- Active recruitment of diverse staff at all levels of the organization
- Cultural Competence training is required annually for all staff per MDHHS and CARF. Available through Lakeshore Regional Entity’s Learning Management System.

Linguistic Competency

CMHOC recognizes that language barriers, when not addressed, operate as a significant obstacle to receiving needed and timely mental health services and can be detrimental to the achievement of positive treatment outcomes. Linguistic competency requires that organizations have:

- Services and supports that are delivered in the preferred language and/or mode of communication of the person;
- Written and electronic materials that are translated, adapted, and/or provided in alternative formats based on the needs and preferences of individuals;
- Interpretation and translation services that comply with relevant federal, state, and local requirements governing language access;
- Consumer feedback opportunities regarding ease of preferred language access to ensure quality and satisfaction.

CMHOC has developed the following standards to ensure linguistically competent supports and services:

- Use of Language Line or Voices for Health to provide live and immediate translation services for most languages.
 - Utilize “I Speak” cards to identify the preferred language.
- 711 Relay service to provide voice and TTY based services for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or have speech disabilities calling from any phone.
 - For Face-to-Face appointments, we have sign language interpreters available through Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Recruitment and hiring of bilingual employees.
- CMHOC brochures and information sheets available in multiple languages and formats.
- All consumer materials written in clear, understandable language; 6.9 grade level writing.
- The availability of interpretation services for consumer appointments or crisis intervention services.
- Operational guideline titled “Obtaining Interpretive Services” to assist staff in accessing interpretation services for people who speak another language, are visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing, or require other cultural or ethnic accommodations.
- Ongoing evaluation of language services.

Goals

This annual cultural competency plan has been developed to define the expectations of the organization and individual staff with respect to providing culturally proficient services. CMHOC identifies targeted goals, develops specific strategies to meet those desired goals, and measures the extent to which these goals are met.

Review of 2022 Goals

Goal	Status	Strategy	Measure
All CMHOC staff will understand the concept of cultural competency and limited English proficiency (LEP)	NEW	Staff will be assigned the online cultural competency update and LEP update training.	Training center will verify completion of online training on MyLearningPointe.
CMHOC staff will participate in at least 1 activity to enhance their knowledge about cultural diversity	Ongoing	Supervisors will encourage employees to participate in various trainings, events, and opportunities made available in the community.	Staff will submit completed Staff Development Form to CMHOC Training Center for entry into their training record.

2023 Goals

Goal	Status	Strategy	Measure
All CMHOC staff will understand the concept of cultural competency and limited English proficiency (LEP)	Ongoing	Staff will be assigned the online cultural competency update and LEP update training.	Training center will verify completion of online training on MyLearningPointe.
Provide Cultural Awareness training to CMHOC staff.	Ongoing	Program Coordinator for Contracts and Training and Program Supervisor for Integrated Care and Community Development will coordinate cultural awareness training as required by CCBHC.	Staff will submit completed Staff Development Form to CMHOC Training Center for entry into their training record.
CMHOC staff will participate in at least 1 activity to enhance their knowledge about cultural competency.	Ongoing	Supervisors will encourage employees to participate in various trainings, events, and opportunities made available in the community.	Staff will submit completed Staff Development Form to CMHOC Training Center for entry into their training record.

Summary

Recognizing and understanding cultural differences and developing culturally competent supports and services is an ongoing process. This process requires a commitment to and appreciation of those differences by all staff. The development and implementation of culturally and linguistically competent services is one of the most important components to ensuring positive health outcomes for diverse populations and the people of Ottawa County. CMHOC recognizes the value of this work and remains dedicated to this process by continually integrating new knowledge and resources into learning opportunities for staff.

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