

Building Cultural Bridges

Diversity and Inclusion



We benefit and draw strength from our differences. Diversity is our daily experience,
a journey – not a destination.

-AAHS Value

Objectives

- Explore the concepts and definitions of culture and cultural competency
- Discuss the benefits of a culturally competent organization
- Increase the ability to effectively communicate across cultural lines



Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Respect

Anne Arundel Health Systems promotes inclusiveness, diversity and universal respect for all people.

- We expect vendors to offer the same nondiscriminatory, culture-free business treatment. We expect those vendors to which we give our business to share our organization's regard for inclusiveness and diversity, and to show professional respect to people in their business dealings.
 - Respect other's opinions
 - Don't Stereotype
 - Don't judge others by your own cultural standards
 - Don't assume your culture is the only way
 - Don't talk down to anyone, communicate effectively
 - Give others the benefit of the doubt
 - Seek first to understand other's point of views; then to be understood

All Communication is Filtered Through Your Cultural Perspective

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ➤ Age | ➤ Geographic location |
| ➤ National origin | ➤ Functional discipline |
| ➤ Race | ➤ Languages used |
| ➤ Sexual orientation | ➤ Values |
| ➤ Religion | ➤ Communication style |
| ➤ Disability | ➤ Work Style |
| ➤ Gender | ➤ Learning style |
| ➤ Education | ➤ Economic status |
| ➤ Work role/experience | ➤ Family situation |
| ➤ Personality | ➤ Military experience |
| ➤ Customs | ➤ Philosophical perspective |

Diversity and Cultural Defined

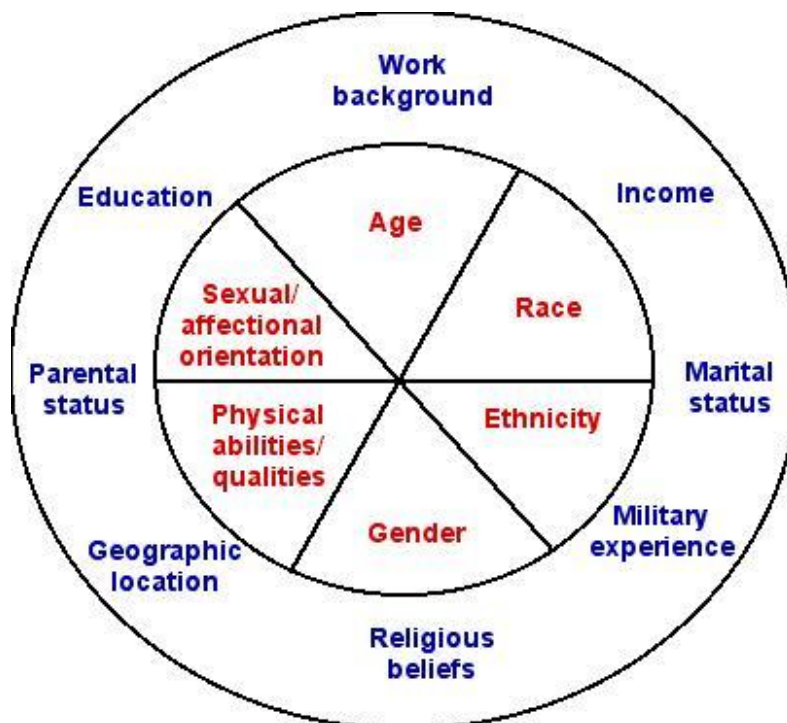
Diversity is the variety of people who bring a mixture of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the groups and organizations with which they interact.

Culture is the sum total of the way of living; includes values, beliefs, standards, language, thinking patterns, behavioral norms, communications styles, etc. It guides decisions and actions of a group through time.

Dimensions of Diversity

The diverse world in which we live is a composite of many cultures, values and ways of interacting with one another. The dimensions of diversity include gender, religious beliefs, race, marital status, ethnicity, parental status, age, education, physical and mental ability, income, sexual orientation, occupation, language, geographic location, and many more components. Understanding the dimensions of diversity and world cultures will help ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Dimensions of Diversity



What is Diversity To You?

Our Perception is Based On:

- Life experiences
- Parental influence
- Peer-group influence
- Media influence
- Education vs. socialization

Benefits of Workforce Diversity & Inclusion (Cultural Competence)

- Improved understanding of those you work for, with, and around.
- Creates a work environment that allows everyone to reach their full potential.
- Provides multiple perspectives on problem solving.
- Better performance outcomes.
- Increases employee productivity.
- Increased retention rates.
- Boosts employee morale.
- Improved customer relations.
- Reduces complaints and grievances.
- It's the right thing to do!



Cultural Competence

Cultural Competence is a set of congruent *behaviors, practices, attitudes and policies* that come together in a system or agency or among professionals, enabling effective work to be done in cross-cultural situations.

'Competence' implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by consumers and their communities

Why is it important?

Cultural competency is one of the main ingredients in closing the disparities gap in health care. It's the way patients and doctors can come together and talk about health concerns without cultural differences hindering the conversation, but enhancing it. Quite simply, health care services that are respectful of and responsive to the health beliefs, practices and cultural and linguistic needs of diverse patients can help bring about positive health outcomes.

Culture and language may influence:

- ✓ health, healing, and wellness belief systems;
- ✓ how illness, disease, and their causes are perceived; both by the patient/consumer and
- ✓ the behaviors of patients/consumers who are seeking health care and their attitudes toward health care providers.

Cultural competence comprises four components:

- (a) Awareness of one's own cultural worldview
- (b) Attitude towards cultural differences
- (c) Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and
- (d) Cross-cultural skills. Developing cultural competence results in the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.

Acquiring Cultural Competence

- Starts with *Awareness*
- Grows with *Knowledge*
- Enhanced with *Specific Skills*
- Polished through *Cross-Cultural Encounters*

To Suspend Judgment One Must:

- Seek first to understand before being understood
- Observe and actively listen without judging—remember listening does not equate to agreeing
- Be willing to allow people to feel what they feel
- Be willing to commit to future actions—way ahead

Impediments to Cross-Cultural Communication

- Irrational Assumptions
- Misunderstanding
- Prejudice
- Fear

By understanding, valuing, and incorporating the cultural differences of a very diverse population and examining one's own health-related values and beliefs, we are better equipped to directly serve the unique needs of our customers.

Cross-Cultural Communication Strategies

The key to effective cross-cultural communication is knowledge.

- First, it is essential that we understand the potential problems of cross-cultural communication, and make a conscious effort to overcome these problems.
- Second, it is important to assume that one's efforts will not always be successful, and adjust one's behavior appropriately.

For example, we should always assume that there is a significant possibility that cultural differences are causing communication problems, and be willing to be patient and forgiving, rather than hostile and aggressive, if problems develop.

- Respond slowly and carefully in cross-cultural exchanges, not jumping to the conclusion that you know what is being thought and said.
- Active listening should be used by repeating what one thinks he or she heard, one can confirm that one understands the communication accurately. If words are used differently between languages or cultural groups, however, even active listening can overlook misunderstandings.
- Some cultures move quickly to the point; others talk about other things long enough to establish rapport or a relationship with the other person. If discussion on the primary topic begins too soon, the group that needs a "warm up" first will feel uncomfortable.

The Bottom Line

- Diversity provides a richer variety of approaches to work and problem solving.
- Diversity strengthens an organization's resilience in changing environmental conditions.
- Diversity allows challenges to long-accepted views.
- Diversity creates dynamic work environments through variety of perspectives.



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