An essential component of cultural competence is self-assessment. We have to take time to reflect and critically look at or examine ourselves and our own organizations.

Benefits of Self-Assessment

- Gauge the degree to which an organization is effectively responding to and addressing cultural and linguistic diversity
- Determine the knowledge, skills, interests, and needs of staff, faculty, students, and board members about cultural diversity and cultural and linguistic competence within the contexts of their roles and responsibilities
- Improve access to, utilization of, outcomes, and satisfaction with services provided by the organization
- Establish partnerships that meaningfully involve diverse sectors of the behavioral health, health, child welfare, education (primary, secondary, post-secondary), juvenile justice, business, philanthropic, and other communities
- Determine strengths and areas for growth related to cultural and linguistic competence for individuals employed by or affiliated with the organization

Excerpt from A Guide to Planning and Implementing Cultural Competence Organizational Self-Assessment

Conceptual Framework for Self-Assessment

- Achieving cultural competence is a developmental process at the individual and organizational levels
- With appropriate support, individuals can enhance cultural awareness, knowledge and skills
- Cultural and linguistic strengths exist within organizations or networks but often go untapped

Participants will:

1. Describe benefits of cultural and linguistic competence self-assessment for organizations and the children, youth, and families they serve and support.
2. Examine two approaches for cultural and linguistic competence self-assessment and decide on their distinct advantages and disadvantages within the context of a case study.
3. Apply the “Useful Steps” for conducting self-assessment to their own organizational and program settings to develop a take home action plan.
Philosophical Construct

Assessing the attitudes, behaviors, policies, structures and practices of an organization, including those of its board, staff, and volunteers, is a necessary, effective, and systematic way to plan for and incorporate cultural and linguistic competence.

Sources:  Cultural & Linguistic Competence Self-Assessment Instrument for Foundations, 2004
Slide Source: National Center for Cultural Competence, 2014

NCCC’s Values & Guiding Principles for Self-Assessment

- strengths-based model
- safe & non-judgmental environment
- meaningful involvement of organizations and individuals that receive, partner, or contract for services
- results and enhance and build capacity
- diverse dissemination strategies


List guiding values and principles that you feel are essential to cultural competence organizational assessment.

NCCC’s Four-Phases of Self-Assessment

Phase 1 • Establish a structure to guide the work.
Phase 2 • Create a shared vision and establish shared ownership.
Phase 3 • Collect, analyze, and disseminate data.
Phase 4 • Develop and implement a plan of action.


Useful Steps in Planning & Implementing Organizational Assessment

- Cultivating leadership
- Getting “buy-in”
- Forming collaborative partnerships
- Identifying support for key processes
- Allocating resources & evaluating
- Managing logistics
- Analyzing & disseminating data
- Taking “next steps”


It is incumbent upon leadership to convey a clear message that the process of cultural competence assessment is:

- Important to the future of the organization
- Essential to implementing the core functions of the organization
- Achieving equity
How will you get “buy-in” from:
- leadership
- staff
- families
- youth
- system partners

Determine what you want to achieve from the assessment process
- Outcomes dictate: Instrument and processes to employ and who participates
- One size does not fit all
- Few instruments developed specifically for assessing the cultural and linguistic competence of the array of organizations in systems of care

Innovations in Self-Assessment:
NCCC’S LESSONS LEARNED
- Time & resource intensive
- Determine organizational readiness
- Anticipate resistance
- The process is as important as the outcome
- Leadership “buy-in” a necessity
- Involvement of stakeholders and community is essential

A primary goal of cultural competence organizational assessment is change.
"Culture does not change because we desire to change it. Culture changes when the organization is transformed; the culture reflects the realities of people working together every day.”

Frances Hesselbein
The Key to Cultural Transformation, Leader to Leader (Spring 1999)