



Guidelines To Incorporate Cultural Competence In Oral Healthcare Settings



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INTRODUCTION

Social determinants of health (SDH) significantly impact health outcomes, particularly for marginalized groups, who often face limited access to healthcare due to unfavorable SDH.

Chronic illnesses, particularly those affecting African Americans and Latinos, are among the most expensive medical conditions in America. As the population ages, these illnesses restrict activities and exacerbate the existing linguistic and cultural challenges. By 2050, one in five Americans will be elderly, and of those over 65, 35% will be individuals from racial or ethnic marginalized groups. Addressing these challenges is crucial to improve patient outcomes. Healthcare institutions often overlook the diversity in gender, ethnicity, and cultural aspects, highlighting the importance of addressing racial and ethnic diversity and cultural competency to improve healthcare services. (1)

Cultural and linguistic competence refers to the set of compatible attitudes, actions, and rules that facilitate effective cooperation across cultural boundaries. Organizations must exhibit behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures that support cross-cultural collaboration, value diversity, manage differences, learn, integrate cultural knowledge, and adapt to varied situations, making it an ongoing process. (2)





PRINCIPLES OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE

01

THE BROAD IDEA OF CULTURE.

02

**UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURAL
VALUES OF PATIENTS.**

03

**UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFICULTIES OF
LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION.**

04

**ENCOURAGING LEARNING BETWEEN
PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITIES.**

05

**INVOLVE COMMUNITY, COLLABORATE WITH
AGENCIES, TRAIN STAFF PROFESSIONALLY,
ENFORCE CULTURAL COMPETENCE.**

The standard of care can be effectively improved by using cultural competency, and one important measure of its effectiveness is the quality of care received. Examining irregular appointment patterns and highlighting youth-sensitive strategies like free transit and weekend hours are a couple of instances of this. (2)

Connecticut's Medicaid Gap Analysis Study on oral health care highlights discrimination and unfair treatment for Medicaid enrollees due to gender, race, or ethnicity. The study recommends more training for front desk employees and healthcare professionals to build trust and improve patient outcomes. Education programs for students, dentists, and other staff are also recommended to improve patient outcomes and reduce anxiety. Investigations should also explore the acceptability and barriers to developing a dental therapy workforce in Connecticut who come from the communities they serve. (3)

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ORAL AND MEDICAL HEALTH FIELD

Ethnic underserved groups, particularly African Americans and Latinos, report poorer satisfaction with care, less involvement in medical decisions, and less interaction with doctors. (Cooper & Roter. 2003.) Non-White patients, particularly Latinos and Asian Americans, report poorer patient-physician relations and lower general health care satisfaction. (Saha, S., Arbelaez, J. J., Cooper, L. A. 2003.) Asian Americans, Latinos, and African Americans are more inclined to think that they would have been treated better if they were a different racial or cultural group. (Collins et al. 2002.) (1)

A diversified dental workforce focuses on cultural competence, enabling healthcare professionals to understand and address the diverse cultures and values of their patients. This concept is encouraged in dental school courses, encouraging collaboration with peers from all backgrounds. Healthcare personnel must continuously develop cultural competence to deliver services in a culturally appropriate manner. Cultural competence is a process built on previous experience and understanding rather than an outcome. (4)

GUIDELINES FOR ENHANCING CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ORAL HEALTH CARE FIELD (1) (8)

1

Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity:

- Be aware of your own cultural background and biases.
- Develop an understanding and appreciation of the cultural diversity present in your patient population.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural nuances and differences in communication styles.

2

Language Access:

- Provide language assistance services, such as interpreters or translated materials, to overcome language barriers.
- Ensure that consent forms, educational materials, and health information are available in languages spoken by the community.

3

Respect for Beliefs and Practices:

- Understand and respect diverse health beliefs, practices, and traditional healing methods.
- Seek to integrate culturally competent approaches into treatment plans, respecting patients' preferences, and values.



4

Culturally Tailored Communication:

- Use plain language and avoid medical terminology to enhance understanding.
- Employ visual aids and multimedia resources to supplement verbal communication.
- Be attentive to non-verbal cues and body language.

5

Community Engagement:

- Establish partnerships with community leaders and organizations to better understand community needs and preferences.
- Involve community members in the development of health programs and initiatives.

6

Inclusive Policies and Practices:

- Review and revise policies to ensure they are inclusive and respectful of diverse cultural practices.
- Consider the needs of diverse populations when designing waiting areas, signage, and other physical aspects of healthcare facilities.

7

Provider Training and Education:

- Implement ongoing cultural competence training for healthcare providers.
- Foster a culture of diversity and inclusion within the healthcare organization.

8

Patient-Centered Care:

- Involve patients in decision-making processes and respect their autonomy.
- Be open to alternative treatments that may align with a patient's cultural beliefs.

9

Understanding Socioeconomic Factors:

- Recognize and address social determinants of health, such as economic status, education, and housing, which can impact health outcomes.

10

Regular Feedback and Evaluation:

- Collect feedback from diverse patient groups to continuously improve cultural competence.
- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of cultural competence initiatives within the healthcare organization.
- By adopting these best practices, healthcare providers can create a more inclusive and culturally competent environment, leading to improved health outcomes for diverse populations.



RESOURCES FOR IMPROVING CULTURAL COMPETENCY



A Physician's Practical Guide- online learning program

- Trains healthcare professionals to understand and address cultural disparities in patient care, anticipating future diversity. Goal is to enhance communication and treatment outcomes by promoting cultural competence. (5)
- Link: <https://cccm.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/>



National Center for Cultural Competence approach

- To address diversity, inequities, and promote health and mental health equity, the NCCC (National Center for Cultural Competence) aspires to improve healthcare programmers' ability to plan, execute, and evaluate culturally and linguistically competent service delivery systems. (6)
- Link: <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/>



University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) and Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development (GUCCHD)

- Are in Year 2 of a project integrating cultural diversity into UCEDD training. They aim to create tools for diverse and linguistic competence, prioritizing marginalized groups. (7)
- Link: <https://uceddclctraining.org/home>



Accreditation standards

- Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), sets global accreditation standards for medical schools, emphasizing cultural competence in curricula to address diversity, health challenges, and biases. (1)
- Link: <https://hpi.georgetown.edu/cultural/>

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, addressing health disparities tied to social determinants requires a concerted effort to enhance the quality of care through culturally competent engagement with diverse patient populations. Cultural competence, involving attitudes, actions, and policies for effective cross-cultural collaboration, is crucial for bridging healthcare gaps and improving patient outcomes.

Best practices, as outlined in the report, encompass fostering cultural awareness, providing language access, respecting diverse beliefs, tailoring communication, engaging with communities, implementing inclusive policies, prioritizing provider training, embracing patient-centered care, considering socioeconomic factors, and promoting continuous feedback and evaluation. Adhering to these guidelines empowers oral healthcare providers to create inclusive environments, fostering more equitable and improved health outcomes for all patient populations.

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