a framework for cultural competence

This is the first in a series of tip sheets on cultural competence in the health sector. It provides a definition and performance standards.

Definition: Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals; enabling that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross et al, 1989).

Why is it important?

Cultural competence offers a framework through which to improve service delivery to clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

This framework enables you to assess and make improvements to every aspect of your organisation, from management and governance structures to service delivery and staff development. It will help ensure that all clients receive high quality and culturally appropriate care.

Who are these tip sheets for?

These tip sheets are intended for health service providers, from hospitals to community health and mental health. They can be used by staff at all levels: board, management, client services, human resources, communications and administration.

Domains of cultural competence

The eight tip sheets in this series cover different domains. These domains are interrelated and provide a comprehensive framework for assessing and improving cultural competence.

Organisational values
How to demonstrate the value that your organisation places on cultural competence.

Governance
How to embed cultural competence in your organisation's advisory bodies, policies, standards and goals.

Planning, monitoring & evaluation
How to ensure that programmatic and operational plans address cultural competence issues, and how to track and assess your organisation's progress.

cultural competence series
March 2012
### Domains of cultural competence (continued)

**Communication**
How to support the effective and culturally appropriate exchange of information between your organisation and its clients, and between staff members.

**Staff development**
How to equip staff and service providers with the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to deliver culturally competent services.

**Organisational infrastructure**
How to identify and allocate the resources needed to plan, deliver and evaluate culturally competent services.

**Services & interventions**
How to deliver or facilitate clinical, public health or health-related services in a culturally competent manner.

(Source: The Lewin Group, 2002)

### References


### Other tip sheets in this series

- Cultural competence in organisational values
- Cultural competence in governance
- Cultural competence in planning, monitoring & evaluation
- Cultural competence in communication
- Cultural competence in staff development
- Cultural competence in organisational infrastructure
- Cultural competence in services & interventions

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