



Center For Family Services

Commitment to Intercultural Competence and Awareness

Introduction

Center For Family Services is committed to incorporating multi-cultural principles and practices throughout our continuum of care. The agency strives to provide programs and services that are linguistically appropriate, culturally relevant, and sensitive. Center For Family Services' guiding principle is *"To honor diversity and to provide services with awareness of and sensitivity to the strengths and skills of diverse ethnicities and cultures, languages, socio-economic classes, disabilities, religions, genders, and sexual orientations"* (Center For Family Services, Goals & Values). Center For Family Services respects the dignity of each individual. Through collaborative and culturally responsive service delivery, individuals and families are honored as experts in their own lives.

Center For Family Services' Board of Trustees has committed to intercultural competence, awareness, diversity and inclusion through the adoption and approval of the following policy statement that *"policies and practices recognize, respect and respond to the unique, culturally-defined needs of persons and families within its service population."*

Center For Family Services' **mission** is to support and empower individuals, families and communities to achieve a better life through vision, hope and strength. Our **vision** is for all people to lead capable, responsible, fulfilled lives in strong families and healthy communities. This mission and vision rests on a foundation that prioritizes identifying, developing, and providing culturally accessible and responsive services.

Center For Family Services stands against all racism and implicit bias that exists within many of our systems that are supposed to ensure all people have access to fair judicial treatment, educational success, quality health care, food security, housing, and socioeconomic mobility. Center For Family Services acknowledges that these societal inequities are real and significant barriers to people and communities working to reach their full potential. Together we must advocate for the change necessary to bring social justice to our communities. Center For Family Services will continue our efforts to keep a conversation going about social justice, inequity, systemic racism, and cultural diversity. We will work with community members to continue to expand our efforts for social advocacy.

Center For Family Services' commitment to Intercultural Competence and Awareness is guided through a staff-driven Intercultural Competence Committee. The mission statement of the Center For Family Services Intercultural Competence Committee is "to foster mutual respect of staff and clients through broadening cultural awareness of our ever changing community." The Intercultural Competence Committee, which was established in 2007, has championed the advancement of intercultural awareness through opportunities for learning and training, and providing a platform for growth through the agency's Intercultural Competence Plan. The committee is comprised of a diverse staff from all across the agency inclusive of staff with varying backgrounds, experiences and education. The

Intercultural Competence Committee is supported by and receives oversight from the agency's executive team.

In 2008, Center For Family Services implemented an Intercultural Competence Plan. The plan is reviewed and updated by the Intercultural Competence Committee as our commitment to the agency's continued self-reflection and growth around cultural awareness and development of cultural competence.

Center For Family Services takes a number of measures to provide services in an inclusive, culturally competent, and sensitive manner. The organization's goal is to utilize an intersectional lens to promote a holistic approach to service delivery. The agency prioritizes diversity, and linguistic and cultural competence as important factors that impact hiring, training and program practices. Staff represent and are knowledgeable about the cultures and communities they serve.

Cultural/Intercultural Competence and Awareness

Center For Family Services is committed to ensuring that all staff across the agency are knowledgeable of their own identities and embrace the differences in those around us in the workplace and through the delivery of services. By honoring and celebrating differences, Center For Family Services values an inclusive environment for all staff, stakeholders, and those served in our community. Center For Family Services has adopted the National Association of Social Workers' Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence (NASW, 2003). Due to Center For Family Services' commitment to intercultural competence, awareness and social justice, these standards and indicators are applied to all staff across the organization.

Standard 1. Ethics and Values Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, shall function in accordance with the values, ethics, and standards of the NASW (2008) Code of Ethics. Cultural competence requires self-awareness, cultural humility, and the commitment to understanding and embracing culture as central to effective practice.

Standard 2. Self-Awareness Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, shall demonstrate an appreciation of their own cultural identities and those of others. Social workers must also be aware of their own privilege and power and must acknowledge the impact of this privilege and power in their work with and on behalf of clients. Social workers will also demonstrate cultural humility and sensitivity to the dynamics of power and privilege in all areas of social work.

Standard 3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, shall possess and continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding that is inclusive of, but not limited to, the history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions such as race and ethnicity; immigration and refugee status; tribal groups; religion and spirituality; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; social class; and mental or physical abilities of various cultural groups.

Standard 4. Cross-Cultural Skills Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, will use a broad range of skills (micro, mezzo, and macro) and techniques that demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the importance of culture in practice, policy, and research.

Standard 5. Service Delivery Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, shall be knowledgeable about and skillful in the use of services, resources, and institutions and be available to serve multicultural communities. They shall be able to make culturally appropriate referrals within both formal and informal networks and shall be cognizant of, and work to address, service gaps affecting specific cultural groups.

Standard 6. Empowerment and Advocacy Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, shall be aware of the impact of social systems, policies, practices, and programs on multicultural client populations, advocating for, with, and on behalf of multicultural clients and client populations whenever appropriate. Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, should also participate in the development and implementation of policies and practices that empower and advocate for, and include, marginalized and oppressed populations.

Standard 7. Diverse Workforce Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, shall support and advocate for recruitment, admissions and hiring, and retention efforts in social work programs and organizations to ensure diversity within the profession.

Standard 8. Professional Education Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, shall advocate for, develop, and participate in professional education and training programs that advance cultural competence within the profession. Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, should embrace cultural competence as a focus of lifelong learning.

Standard 9. Language and Communication Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, shall provide and advocate for effective communication with clients of all cultural groups, including people of limited English proficiency or low literacy skills, people who are blind or have low vision, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and people with disabilities (Goode & Jones, 2009).

Standard 10. Leadership to Advance Cultural Competence Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, shall be change agents who demonstrate the leadership skills to work effectively with multicultural groups in agencies, organizational settings, and communities. Social workers, and all Center For Family Services staff, should also demonstrate responsibility for advancing cultural competence within and beyond their organizations, helping to challenge structural and institutional oppression and build and sustain diverse and inclusive institutions and communities.

References

National Association of Social Workers. (2003). Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice. Washington D.C.: National Association of Social Workers