

O'Brien House Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan Policy

1. O'Brien House Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan

The organization has a plan on cultural competency and diversity that addresses: Competency relative to the cultural needs of the persons served; Competency relative to the linguistic needs of the persons served and Recruitment of persons who are representative of the specific cultures the organization serves for positions in leadership, management, direct service and support services----that are addressed by utilizing the practices and procedures that are adhered to in the form of Cultural Competency Standards.

These Cultural Competency Standards will provide the best program and services for the client and ensure client dignity:

- (1) Informing and supporting individual client meal preferences related to spiritual beliefs.
- (2) Supporting client spirituality preferences to attend church functions or spiritual activities. It is not mandatory to attend; therefore we provide a setting that promotes respect of choices.
- (3) O'Brien House practices the following policies to ensure good legal and moral standing: Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy and the Non-Discriminatory Policy.
- (4) O'Brien House hires former clients who have graduated and exemplified sobriety; and/or employees who have been in recovery and understand the phases of independence and living sober successfully.
- (5) The mission of O'Brien House is to "save lives and families from addiction". The entire environment strives to promote sobriety, provide services and support to clients in recovery and on the road to independence - - - that will ensure a clean, sober, and drug free productive life.
- (6) O'Brien House has diversified representatives on the board with different positions with various occupations throughout the community. We have lawyers on board who can help with many of the issues that may face O'Brien House: trial, construction, personnel and contracts. In addition, we have members on the board that represent business development, financial investments and accounting.
- (7) O'Brien House acknowledges the need to accommodate individuals with different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultural needs, physical limitations, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status (social and financial conditions). OBH has a staff dedicated to meet these needs based on: 1) a needs-based assessment, 2) Client self-report of said needs / Staff evaluation, 3) the availability and competency level / resources available to the staff, to provide special services.

(8) O'Brien House provides cultural competency and diversity training to all employees.

OBH is able to utilize different therapeutic techniques to achieve marked levels of cultural competency and innovation. These techniques include: A. Cinema-therapy, B. Cultural / Ethnic themed groups and activities, and C. Advocacy Activities that give continued participation in community events that advocate for both mental illness and addiction:

- A. Cinema-Therapy:** Utilization of feature films, documentaries, and brief clips to assist Clients with processing specific issues and recognizing solutions to commonly identified problems among the Client population. Cinema-therapy also strengthens group cohesiveness, as well as providing needed and appropriate levels of recreation to the Clients.
- B. Cultural / Ethnic:** OBH Clients have the opportunity and the right to participate in activities that recognize and encourage their cultural and ethnic development. Clients are actively encouraged to participate in activities which place emphasis on the individual. A few of these activities include: Poetry readings, Father's / Mother's Day events, Evidence-based interventions which recognize the limitations placed on them due to their race, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. These interventions place emphasis on clinical support, and respect for the individual.
- C. Advocacy Activities:** Clients' are also advised of the importance of advocating for their rights outside the agencies walls through the encouragement to attend outside events and let their voices be heard.
- D. O'Brien House provides Cultural Competency and Diversity Training and reviews the plan annually during PPM Treatment Section reviews; and is updated as needed.**
- E. Source:** CARF Standards, O'Brien House By-Laws, O'Brien House, Accessibility Plan/CARF/docs.ca/files1
- F. The following provides an overview of Cultural Competency & Diversity:**

Cultural Competence & Diversity

Cultural competence is the ability to successfully teach students who come from a culture or cultures other than our own. It entails developing certain personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, understanding certain bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching and culturally responsive teaching.

We all have a culture that shapes us personally and professionally. According to NEA's (National Education Association) C.A.R.E. Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gaps, "Culture is the sum total of experiences, knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and interests represented by the diversity of students and adults in our schools. While culture is often defined and perceived by schools as the celebration of important people, religions, traditions, and holidays, as well as an appreciation of the customs of different groups, it is also more than that. Culture is as much, or as little, as the everyday experiences, people, events, smells, sounds, and habits of behavior that characterize students' and educators' lives. Culture shapes a person's sense of who he or she is and where he or she fits in the family, community, and society."

Understanding our culture is important so that we understand how we interact with individuals from cultures that are different from ours. This understanding helps us see our students and their families more clearly, and shape policies and practice in ways that will help our students to succeed.

There are five basic cultural competence skill areas. They apply to individual educators as well as the schools they work in and the educational system as a whole. Growth in one area tends to support growth in another (Adapted from Diller and Moule, *Cultural Competence: A Primer for Educators*, Thomson Wadsworth 2005):

- **Valuing Diversity.** Accepting and respecting differences—different cultural backgrounds and customs, different ways of communicating, and different traditions and values.
- **Being Culturally Self-Aware.** Culture—the sum total of an individual's experiences, knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and interests—shapes educators' sense of who they are and where they fit in their family, school, community, and society.
- **Dynamics of Difference.** Knowing what can go wrong in cross-cultural communication and how to respond to these situations.
- **Knowledge of Students' Culture.** Educators must have some base knowledge of their students' culture so that student behaviors can be understood in their proper cultural context.
- **Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge and Adapting to Diversity.** Culturally competent educators, and the institutions they work in, can take a step further by institutionalizing cultural knowledge so they can adapt to diversity and better serve diverse populations.

Cited source: <http://www.nea.org/tools/diversity-toolkit.html> (students = clients/residents/staff; utilized as a teaching tool)/Treatment 2014