



CULTURAL DIVERSITY PLAN

For year 2012

OVERVIEW

House of Freedom is always seeking to improve the quality of life for all staff, persons served, their families, and other organizations that may come into contact with us. We expect to achieve this goal by educating and training our staff members on the dynamics of growing and culturally diverse community. Through this type of education, we will enhance our awareness, compassion, and ability to interact with others who are different than ourselves with dignity, respect, patience, and understanding. Embracing diversity in the workplace makes for better creativity, acceptance, tolerance, and innovation. It also broadens the range of knowledge, skills, and abilities of our staff members. Better clinical decisions can be made based on culturally diverse perspectives. Our focus on cultural competency and diversity will enable us to improve our ability to provide culturally sensitive services to the individuals we serve.

DEFINITIONS

Culture – The life patterns, language and beliefs of a group of people. Culture consists of ideals, values, and assumptions about life that are widely shared among the members. It is also referred to as the behavior and values of a group of people. It is the major way in which human beings adapt to their environment and give meaning to their lives.

Cultural Competency –The word culture is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communication, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. Competence means that a person has the capacity to successfully function within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior as defined by the group.

Process

In order to promote cultural diversity, House of Freedom is engaged in the following activities:

- Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employment initiatives for hiring process.
- All new employees must review the Cultural Diversity Plan as part of orientation.
- During the interview process, questions regarding one's thoughts and feelings about culture and diversity are asked of each applicant.
- An annual assessment is conducted of demographic information on the individuals that we serve.
- Employees will be provided with regular training on cultural competency from professional authorities and internal trainers.
- Select staff that present talks, workshops, and/or provide educational information on culturally diverse topics.
- Professional literature that relates to cultural competency and diversity is routinely distributed to employees.
- Supervisors assure that ongoing and open discussions regarding cultural competency and diversity occur between their employees, which are documented in staff meeting minutes and/or supervision.

Plan of Action

As we continue to develop and improve our Cultural Diversity Plan, we make sure that the following are always incorporated:

- assistance of professionals who have cultural expertise,
- participation in cultural competency and diversity activities by all staff,
- an observation and implementation process, and
- follow-up activities that incorporate feedback and input from participants.

The goals of this Cultural Diversity Plan is to raise the consciousness of the organization regarding culture and diversity by recognizing the need for ongoing training, dialogue, feedback, and input from all staff. It is important that all staff is involved in the process of making House of Freedom a culturally aware and sensitive environment to all with whom we come into contact.

Cultural competency is the self-examination and in depth exploration of one's own cultural background. This involves the recognition of one's biases, prejudices, and assumptions about persons who are different. Without being aware of the influence of one's own cultural or professional values, there is risk that the provider may engage in cultural imposition. As a team, we are committed to creating an environment conducive for recovery from behavioral health disorders and substance abuse for all who seek services.

**“From one man he made all the nations,
that they should inhabit the whole earth”
Acts 17:26**

For 2012 we plan to work on the following to further our efforts to improve our cultural competence and diversity:

- **Continue to improve employees' awareness of services available relative to cultural awareness and competency.**
 - Facilitate training on:
 - ✓ co-occurring population;
 - ✓ individuals with substance abuse problems, including methadone, who also have mental health disorders;
 - ✓ evidence based practices dealing with people in recovery;
 - ✓ people of color;
 - ✓ recovery information;
 - ✓ wounded warriors and veterans;
 - ✓ people of various cultures, socio-economic status, religions, and linguistic profiles;
 - ✓ cultural awareness/diversity and competency;
 - ✓ advocacy groups
- **Provide HIV/AIDS, H1N1 (Swine Flu) and hepatitis training to staff and persons served to increase community health prevention and awareness.**
- **Provide cultural diversity training annually to build competency of staff.**
- **Strengthen relationships of staff.**
- **Conduct assessment of staff by using various instruments and use data results for development of training.**

- **Ensure that all individuals receive effective understandable and respectful care provided in a manner compatible with their cultural beliefs and preferred language.**
- **Provide language or interpreter assistance when needed (through DCF).**

Summary

There is still a great amount of work to be done and the majority of House of Freedom staff is ready and willing to engage in improving the organization's cultural and linguistic competence.

Past and current efforts to build cultural and linguistic competency includes, but is not limited to, expanding our services to English-speaking persons by providing information and treatment materials in both English and Spanish. Also, the implementation of translation from Spanish to English of our religious services has been well adapted and continues to be part of our efforts for cultural diversity awareness.

As we continue to expand our services, this Cultural Diversity Plan will be an on-going process and will be updated and reviewed accordingly.