

Cultivating Change: Implementing and Responding to a Center-wide Cultural and Linguistic Competence Assessment

Lashanna Brunson, MS, BCBA; Nicholas Larson, MA, CBIS; Joshua Phillips, MA, MPA, CBIS; Nicoletta Ciampa, BM; Magda Rivera-Dillon MSHS, PMP; and Courtney Lanham, MSW

Background

- ⤴ Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) is striving to better serve individuals from diverse populations and to improve cultural and linguistic competence.
- ⤴ The West Virginia University, Center for Excellence in Disabilities (WVU CED) was awarded the Diversity & Disability Fellowship in 2015 to increase knowledge of disability services and the diversity of future leaders in the disability field.
- ⤴ This fellowship opened our eyes to a center-wide need to focus on diversity and inclusion and prepare staff to better serve individuals from diverse backgrounds. It also led to the formation of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee.
- ⤴ The Diversity & Inclusion Committee consists of staff and Diversity & Disability Fellows working to evaluate, foster and advance the WVU CED's vision, mission and core values in regards to cultural and linguistic competency, diversity and inclusion. Our first priority was to conduct a self-assessment of cultural and linguistic competency.

Objective

Assess the WVU CED's current strengths and areas for growth related to cultural and linguistic competence.

Methods/Descriptive of the Project

What: Implement cultural and linguistic competence assessment for disability organizations developed by the National Center for Cultural Competence ¹

- Our world view
- Who we are
- What we do
- How we work

Why:

- Determine strengths and areas for growth in order to improve cultural competency
- Develop an action plan
- Better serve diverse populations

Who: Distributed to 81 WVU CED staff members located in:

- Two main sites (Morgantown and Big Chimney, WV) and
- Departments of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) sites across the state

How: Created SurveyMonkey version of the assessment and emailed the link to WVU CED staff
Length: 25 – 30 minutes; available for two weeks; sent email reminder after one week, encouraging survey completion

Response rate: 48.1% (39 respondents)

Findings/Results

- ⤴ We received 39 responses and out of these, 23 (28.4%) surveys were completed in their entirety.
- ⤴ Categorized results into strengths, areas for growth and challenges.
- ⤴ Compared results to WVU CED's 2012-2017 strategic plan and prioritized areas that were identified in both the assessment and strategic plan.
- ⤴ 92.3% of respondents indicated our organization is very much committed to serving, supporting and educating people who experience disabilities and their families across all cultural groups.
- ⤴ Other results indicated that the majority of WVU CED staff were uninformed about several key concepts measured by the assessment (see below).
- ⤴ Diversity & Inclusion Committee selected priority areas to address.

Cultural and Linguistic Competence Assessment

Key Findings and Recommendations for the Next Five Years

57.6% do not know if the Center Advisory Committee (CAC) is diverse

Recommendation: Raise staff awareness of the CAC existence, role and influence on Center activities by using the WVU CED's website and inviting staff to CAC meetings

64% do not know if we disseminate information in languages other than English (publications, training materials, multimedia resources, website)

Recommendation: Improve cultural and linguistic competency on branded materials

56% of staff do not know the extent to which the WVU CED collaborates with ethnic media and diverse communities to disseminate information

Recommendation: Increase the WVU CED's cultural community reach through active dissemination

65.2% of staff do not know whether the CED provides dedicated funding to advance and sustain cultural and linguistic competence in the form of conferences, education and training activities

56.5% of staff do not know if the CED offers training, mentoring and other supports to advance and sustain cultural and linguistic competence, address racial/ethnic disparities or address disproportionality in educational settings

Recommendation: Increase cultural and linguistic competency of WVU CED personnel (including staff, CAC, trainees and volunteers) by providing training opportunities

Percent of respondents who agreed the following groups are representative of the cultural diversity of people who reside in the U.S.:

24.2% WVU CED organizational leadership

30.3% Center staff

39.4% Trainees

Recommendation: Hire and retain diverse Center staff and organizational leadership by working with human resources leadership at the university

Discussion

- ⤴ UCEDD members can learn from our experience as they implement the self-assessment and strive to increase the diversity of their staff, better serve diverse populations and improve cultural and linguistic competence.
- ⤴ Centers can utilize additional assessments to examine other diversity factors (gender identity,

age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.).

Barriers

- ⤴ Assessment completion takes approximately 30 minutes.
- ⤴ Many respondents only completed the first two sections of the assessment, which were Our World View and Who We Are, before exiting. We believe this was due to the time required to complete the assessment.
- ⤴ Manually inputting questions into SurveyMonkey took a considerable amount of time. Having an online version of the assessment available would help reduce this time.
- ⤴ The degree to which items were relevant to the regular work of respondents varied.

Proposed Action

- ⤴ Offer Center-wide Framework for Understanding Poverty training: Complete
- ⤴ Administer survey to collect demographic information from all WVU CED staff (gender identity, age, education, geographical location): Complete
- ⤴ Invite staff to attend CAC meetings: Ongoing
- ⤴ Launch CAC website: Complete
- ⤴ Allocate WVU CED funding for a Diversity & Disability Fellow: Ongoing
- ⤴ Update WVU CED's social justice statement: Complete
- ⤴ Share webinars and trainings on cultural and linguistic competency

with all staff: Ongoing

- ⤴ Develop a process to mentor staff interested in attending the Diversity and Cultural and Linguistic Competence Leadership Academy: Complete
- ⤴ Support staff participation in the Diversity and Cultural and Linguistic Competence Leadership Academy: Complete; planned for subsequent years
- ⤴ Re-administer self-assessment in fall 2017: Complete

¹Goode, T., Trivedi, P., & Jones, W. (2010). Cultural and Linguistic Competence Assessment for Disability Organization. Washington, DC: National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. The self-assessment can be retrieved from <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/assessments/clcado.php>.