



Cultural Competency and Diversity

Policy #1-4-5

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I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County (JFS) to maintain a written Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan that describes how the linguistic, socioeconomic and cultural needs of our persons served are met. It is our policy to effectively provide services to persons served of all cultures, age, races, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, languages, ethnic backgrounds, spiritual beliefs and religions in a manner that recognizes values, affirms, and respects the worth of the individuals and protects and preserves the dignity of each person. JFS adheres to the equal employment opportunity policy and non-discrimination practices.

II. PURPOSE

To encourage the consideration of others culture, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, religions, race, ethnic background, socioeconomic status and languages in order to create an awareness and knowledge of the diversity of the people encountered at JFS including persons served, personnel, and other stakeholders.

III. DEFINITIONS

Cultural competency: The awareness and acceptance of those from other cultures. This requires that one be aware of their own culture and its dynamics with other cultures along with their personally held biases. One must also be able to adapt one’s skills to fit the understandings of the culture of the person served. This requires that one have a decent grasp on the culture of the persons served.

Diversity: Diversity is a communal practice that honors and respects each individual’s life perspectives, experiences, histories, beliefs, cultures, values and traditions regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, age and socio-economic status and rises above the power structure that supports institutional discrimination which perpetuates societal privilege.

Equity: Equity is the presence of fair and equal justice and opportunities for all, including those who are in need. JFS is committed to living/practicing the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam, Repairing the World, by reducing barriers to access for services and resources, being an advocate for under-served and under-represented groups, and ensuring that disparities within the organization and the community are recognized and mitigated or eliminated.

Inclusion: Inclusion is providing a welcoming environment with the intention that all those who interact with JFS in any capacity feel comfortable and respected, engaged, valued and heard.

IV. STANDARDS

1. Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan components:

JFS recognizes, respects and addresses the unique needs, worth, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs and values that reflect an individual’s racial, gender, gender identity, gender expression, ethnic, religious, socio-economic status and/or social groups or sexual orientation. This applies to all persons served, JFS staff, volunteers, Board members and other stakeholders. JFS assigns a senior staff member to serve as The Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Officer and this staff member assigns responsibilities for implementing and reporting on the plan to various senior staff as may be indicated by shifts in client populations and other relevant factors that may arise.

1. Staff and Volunteer Awareness and Training:

- a. Staff participate in cultural competency and diversity trainings during Direct Services Committee meetings, and such training is also available on an on-going basis as needed. Training content is evaluated annually and updated as necessary. Training sessions are documented by the Human Resources (HR) Director and is reflected in staff HR records.
- b. Cultural competency and diversity plans, efforts and results are monitored by JFS leadership at least annually or more often if indicated by such occurrences as a meaningful shift in the demographics of client populations. Revisions are then made as appropriate.
- c. Administration and HR make every effort to ensure diversity among JFS personnel, including staff that is culturally and linguistically competent to work with the agency’s primary demographics and hiring staff that are representative of the persons served.
- d. The agency ensures that staff are informed of all major holidays, dietary restrictions, clothing preferences, attitudes towards impairments, language preferences, cultural practices, and other issues of the persons served by each program.
- e. Staff are prepared to identify how and when to use interpreters and how to obtain these services for the clients.
- f. Appropriate efforts are made to ensure that signage, forms, and other printed material used by persons served is available in the clients’ native language.
- g. Appropriate efforts are made to ensure that service delivery, including scheduling appointments, use of interpreters, accessibility of services, etc. is conducted in a manner that is culturally appropriate for the person served.
- h. Licensed social work and counseling staff must participate in trainings that focus on cultural competency in addition to the implicit bias training required in the Michigan Public Health Code. Training participation is documented by the Human Resources (HR) Director and is reflected in staff HR records.
- i. Volunteers receive an overall orientation to issues of cultural competency and diversity and also receive targeted training as appropriate to their volunteer assignment and the requirements of clients.

2. Board Training and Awareness:

- a. The Board actively recruits members that reflect the demographic characteristics of the community served.
- b. Board recruits are made aware of the agency’s commitment to diversity and cultural sensitivity and agree to comply with agency policies on these topics.

- c. Board reports include regular updates on the demographics of persons served.
- d. The Board is involved in the creation of the JFS DEI Plan and vote on acceptance of the Plan.

3. Awareness of Persons Served:

- a. Appropriate efforts are made to ensure that all clients are asked of any language, mobility, cultural, spiritual, dietary or other preferences.
- b. Clients are asked to sign an acknowledgment that they reviewed our “Statement of Clients’ Rights and JFS Non-Discrimination Statement.”
- c. Clients are oriented to the JFS systems for filing a complaint and/or suggesting change and are assisted in doing so as necessary.
- d. Clients are surveyed on a regular basis regarding their satisfaction with JFS services including feeling respected as it relates to their culture, age, race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, ethnic background, spiritual beliefs and religion.
- e. Persons served are provided with reasonable accommodation to meet their cultural, religious, age-appropriate and other needs.

4. Funders and Community Stakeholders:

- a. All potential funders are made aware of the demographics of persons served, and are provided with the JFS Statement of Non-Discrimination, as appropriate to qualify for funding.
- b. Appropriate efforts are made to ensure that funding does not prevent the agency from serving any demographic.
- c. Appropriate efforts are made to publicize the agency’s policy of non-discrimination and the availability of services to all residents of Washtenaw County.

V. PROCEDURES

See Cultural Competency & Diversity Plan

VI. EXHIBITS

Exhibit A- JFS Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan

VII. REFERENCES

CARF 2023 Behavioral Health Standards Manual, Section 1. A.5. Leadership; 1. L. Accessibility

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