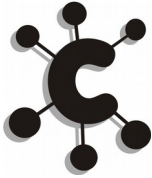


Community Connections Support Services

**Cultural Competency &
Diversity Plan**

for

2016



Community Connections Support Services

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Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan 2016

Working toward cultural competency of our organization involves a number of key steps:

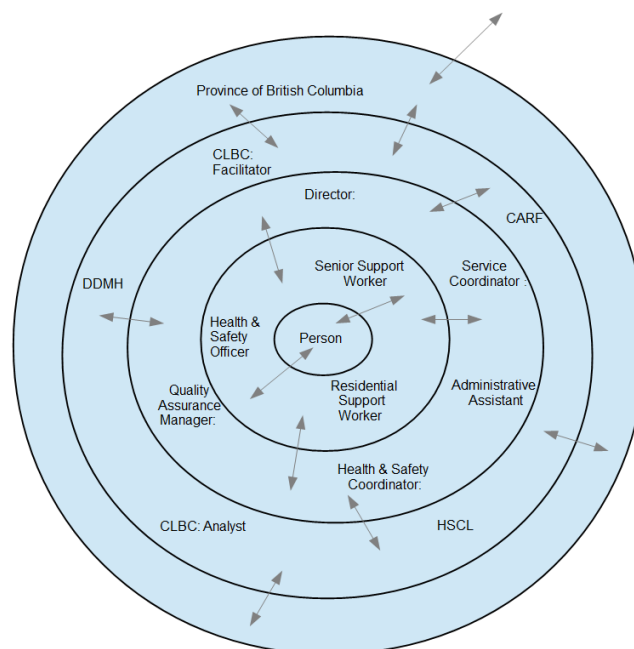
1. Identification of our group identity
2. Exploration and identification of the diversity within our group
3. Developing practices, behaviours and attitudes that honour, respect and integrate the diversity within our group (competence)

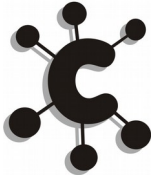
Group Identity

Bibby & Holm (2006) suggest five elements belonging to group identity or 'peoplehood':

1. Shared History: How did we get to be who we are?
2. Place: Where do we live? How do we survive?
3. Rituals: How do we spend time?
4. Language: How do we speak?
5. Space: How do we share space?

Below is an illustration of our 'group' and the interdependence between group members:





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The agency has identified and addressed a number of the elements of group identity in its literature (ie. Policy, brochures, presentations, etc). While we collect information that is relevant to the five elements, we have not organized and analyzed it in a formal way to define our group identity. We recommend implementing further strategies and planning for creating a formal analysis of our agency's group identity. In addition, the agency continues to work at providing information and training sessions to employees, persons served and contractors in group identity. The agency recognizes that there remains 'silo thinking' within the organization, that is; subgroups that are reluctant or averse to recognizing other members of our larger 'peoplehood'. We continue to support teams to understand, connect with and exchange information with other members of their larger group.

Cultural Diversity

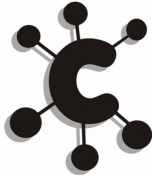
“The phrase 'Cultural Diversity' means a range of different societies or people of different origins, religions and traditions all living and interacting together” (My Learning, 2016) and is an element found in the identity of groups, including our own at Community Connections Support Services.

Cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence (*UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, 2001, Article 3).

Currently, our agency requests information from persons served regarding origin and preference of culture including religion, spirituality and tradition. Though the response to our requests have been limited, we recommend continuing to implement these strategies and extend the information requests to employees, contractors and other stakeholders. We further recommend implementing formal and informal means to exchange this information and open dialogue regarding the value in learning from one another. We believe there is much to be learned and gained by exchanging information and implementing diverse strategies. Development of a cultural diversity project to gather this information into a meaningful format is recommended.

Cultural Competency

“**Cultural competence** is defined as a set of values, behaviors, attitudes, and practices within a system, organization, program or among individuals, which enables them to work effectively, cross culturally. Further, it refers to the ability to honor and respect the beliefs, language, interpersonal styles and behaviors of individuals and families receiving services, as well as staff who are providing such services. Striving to achieve cultural competence is a dynamic, ongoing, developmental process that requires a long-term commitment” (The Denver Foundation).



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Our focus is on working toward cultural competence within our agency and placing emphasis on its importance to the Mission, Philosophy and Guiding Principles of the agency. We recognize that competence is demonstrated in the behaviours, attitudes and expression of values of all members of our group. We are therefore committed to providing education and information to the people we support, our employees, our contractors and stakeholders to further our goal and commit to further research and development of strategies to enhance our competency.

Report Completed: March 2016
Completed by: Jacqueline Burnham,
Director-Strategic Management

References:

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My Learning. (2016). Global Citizens – Make an Impact! Retrieved April 08, 2016, from <http://www.mylearning.org/global-citizens – make-an-impact/p-2022/>

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