National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems

Pieces of the Same Puzzle: The Role of Culture in Person-Centered Thinking, Planning, and Practice

Summary of a webinar from July 9, 2019

Introduction

In person-centered practices, it is important to learn about a person's culture and language. In this webinar, the speakers shared:

- What person-centered thinking, planning, and practices are
- Important things to keep in mind about culture and language
- Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of people who live in states, tribes, and territories
- The role of culture in planning and providing the right supports

This is the first of four webinars on cultural and linguistic competence and person-centered practices. Keep reading for key points from the webinar.

Person-centered thinking, planning, and practices

Person-centered means that the person controls their life and decides what is important <u>to</u> them and <u>for</u> them. They chose:

- Who supports them
- Where they live
- Who they live with
- What they do with their time
- How they use their resources

Culture

Culture is defined in many ways. We can think about culture as what we learn about ourselves and others from the time when we are born. Our families and our communities teach us culture. It includes how we think, communicate, behave, live in, and view the world round us and our culture can change over time. We may think about and only see our own culture. It may be hard for us to see things the way another person sees them.

We all have many cultural identities. For example, you may be a daughter, uncle, student, direct support professional, counselor, or a self-advocate. You may identify by your race or ethnicity – Latino/Latina/Latinx, Black or African American, White, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native. You may identify as gay or a member of the LGBTQ community. You may identify by your religion or spiritual beliefs, the region of the country that you live (e.g., south, mid-west, northeast, or southwest), or that you are from a country outside of the U.S. You may identify as having a disability

that affects how you think, move about, see, communicate, and interact with others. You may identify as an elder or older adult. Or you may identify as having a number of these identities – all at once.

Culture is not only about people, it is also about organizations and systems of services and supports. All organizations, agencies, and programs have their own culture(s) based on what they do, who they serve, who works there, where they are located, and what is the source of their funding. .

Understanding culture is important to person-centered thinking, planning, and practices. Culture influences how we view health, mental health, well-being, illness, and disability. Culture influences what a person believes is important to them and their families. Since we are all cultural beings, programs striving to deliver person-centered thinking, planning, and practices must be responsive to culture.

Andy is an LGBT Hispanic male who uses a wheelchair. He said,
"When I roll into a room, I want all my identities to be respected and valued…"

Changes across the US

The US Census Bureau and other sources tell us that the nation is becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse. Many people self-identify as having more than one race and/or ethnicity. Many people speak languages other than English at home.

Services and Supports

Person-centered means that we must understand and respond to the person's culture and multiple cultural identities. Person-centered means that a person's culture cannot be separated from how services and supports are thought about and provided. Person-centered means that organizations, agencies, and programs must include culture as a routine aspect of all of their practices.

Chacku said to learn about a person's culture, a good question to ask is,
"What matters most to you?"

You can watch the whole webinar and look at the slides here: https://ncapps.acl.gov/Webinars.html

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The speakers on this webinar were:

Tawara Goode, the Director of the Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and the National Center for Cultural Competence.

Andy Arias, a System Change Advocate and Program Manager for Orange County & Los Angeles for over seven years.

Chacku Mathai, an Indian-American, born in Kuwait, who became involved in mental health and addiction recovery advocacy when he was only 15 years old.