Culturally Effective Organizations Framework
ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT©
Quality Improvement Tool to Identify Places for Potential Action

The Framework

Organizations strive to ensure everyone has equal opportunity to thrive by providing high quality services that are accessible to all – yet achieving this can be challenging. Many of us have simply not had access to an effective approach that would turn our goals into broader success. The **Culturally Effective Organizations (CEOrgs) Framework**[i] is the roadmap that enables, cultivates, and supports the delivery of high-quality services for all people.

Framework for a Culturally Effective Organization

The framework is grounded in literature from nationally-recognized entities. The seven key elements are drawn from an analysis of the overlaps and similarities of the recommendations established by various industry accrediting and standard-setting organizations, as well as subject matter experts and the National CLAS Standards[ii].

The framework outlines strategies that organizations working to provide high quality care and services to a diversifying population can take to embark on an ongoing organizational process of improvement to keep pace with changing patient/client and workforce demographics, and to work towards advancing equity. The **Culturally Effective Organizations Framework Online Digital Toolkit**,[iii] with sections for each of the individual framework elements and its accompanying toolkit **webinar,** provide helpful resources to assist on the journey to becoming a culturally effective organization and providing high quality services for all.

The Assessment Tool

The Assessment Tool utilizes the Culturally Effective Organizations Framework to assess the cultural effectiveness of organizations and service providers in many domains including health, healthcare, human, social service, people-serving, education, and non-profit organizations. **This tool is constructed with the recognition that becoming more culturally effective is an adaptive process that takes time. Results from this high level baseline assessment are meant to inform an organization's quality improvement efforts around cultural effectiveness.**

The tool has two components:

- It is designed for use as a quality improvement tool while **reviewing an organization's plan** for cultural effectiveness **or other existing policies and procedures** including strategic planning documents that address cultural effectiveness and/or any of its elements.

- It is a tool to **measure operationalization or implementation** of organizational cultural effectiveness. It **evaluates and assesses an organization's progress** along the seven elements in the Culturally Effective Organizations Framework:

I.	Leadership
II.	Policies and Procedures
III.	Data Collection and Analysis
IV.	Community Engagement
V.	Language and Communication Access
VI.	Staff Cultural Competence
VII.	Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

This tool can be used to conduct an initial baseline assessment to identify areas for further exploration as well as for ongoing monitoring. It can be used by organizations wishing to understand areas of strength and areas of opportunity for growth in the value of organizational cultural effectiveness.

The tool forms the foundation for important discussion. There is great value in having all the different people within an organization share their different perspectives, and then debrief the answers. Dialogue is encouraged. There are no right answers. **By using this tool, organizations can see where they are and then prioritize what they want to work on.**

The **Culturally Effective Organizations Work Group[iv]** is available to provide training and "light" Technical Assistance (TA). Work group members can assist you in using the tool, and/or can point you towards additional resources. Additionally, more in-depth assessments of each individual framework element are also available and can be accessed via the online digital toolkit.

Guide to the Tool

The Assessment is divided into sections by framework element. Within each section is the following:

- Column 1 presents the item number for each section.

- Column 2 presents statements that describe what the element may look like when operationalized.

- Column 3 provides the reviewer with a choice of responses about whether the statement is institutionalized and exists in writing in an organizational plan or policy:
    - "yes" this action exists in writing,
    - this action exists "partially" in writing,
    - "no" this action does not exist in writing, or
    - "not sure" whether this action exists in writing.

- Column 4 provides the reviewer with a choice of responses of whether there is evidence of action of the statement being operationalized within the organization:
    - this action is "not yet" being implemented,
    - this action is "just starting" being implemented,
    - this action is "in progress" of being implemented, or
    - this action is "well on way" of being implemented.

- Column 5 documents the date of implementation of the action and the source of the data, or what is the evidence or example of implementation.

- Column 6 documents who is responsible for oversight and implementation.

- Column 7 is for any comments.

Some find that the tool is best completed by individual members of the organization from *their own* perspective and knowledge where members are encouraged to do basic research or exploration to find answers. Others may find that completing as a group is more useful. The emphasis should not be on combining individual respondents' answers and calculating a cumulative "score", but rather using this tool to facilitate an organization's own processes of exploration by serving as a basis for dialogue, which is the foundation of this work. Regardless of the approach, teams can aim to reach a consensus on the current status of each of the various framework elements within the organization. The tool can provide a benchmark to inform improvement efforts to enhance and build capacity, recognizing that change is an adaptive process that takes time.

Definitions / Key Terms

An important component in group self-assessment is to assure everyone has a shared understanding of key terms and concepts.

> An example of this is the word "community", which our work group members defined variously as "catchment area; people you aim to serve who can be an asset to inform the work you are engaged in; people who are eligible and/or are recipients of services; the neighborhood you are in."

Another important distinction is the difference between "interpretation" and "translation". Interpretation involves the rendering of one spoken or signed language into another language, whereas translation involves conveying meaning from written text in one language to written text in another language.

Your team may discover other terms or concepts that merit discussion during your organization's self-assessment. This can be an unanticipated, and valuable, part of the process.

Adapted From

This tool was created by the New Hampshire Equity Collective[v] (www.equitynh.org), Culturally Effective Organizations Work Group, and was adapted from the following instruments as well as review of numerous other resources and materials, including those produced by the authors of the original Culturally Effective Organizations Framework Issue Brief[vi].

Acevedo, Lauren. "SAMHSA Technical Assistance Tool. CLC Assessment Tool: Based on the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (CLAS Standards)", June 2016. The National Technical Assistance Network for Children's Behavioral Health[vii]

"Strengthening family and community engagement in student learning School Assessment Tool (Reflection Matrix)"[viii] companion to the "Family School Partnerships Framework – A guide for schools and families" (2008).[ix]

Gaiser MD, Jefferson LN, Santos J, Venner S, Boguslaw J, Tellez, T. "Culturally Effective Healthcare Organizations: A Framework for Success" (April 2015). Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Institute on Assets and Social Policy. Issue Brief[x] and Executive Summary.

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[i] The full issue brief can be accessed at http://heller.brandeis.edu/iasp/pdfs/jobs/culturally-effective.pdf

[ii] *National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care*, available at the Office of Minority Health's Cultural and Linguistic Competency site https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=1&lvlid=6

[iii] The online toolkit can be accessed at https://www.amoskeaghealth.org/center-of-excellence-for-culturally-effective-care/

[iv] Information about the Culturally Effective Organizations Work Group can be found at http://equitynh.org/culturally-effective-organizations/

[v] Formerly known as the New Hampshire Health & Equity Partnership
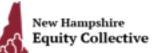
[vi] Brandeis Institute on Assets and Social Policy, Healthcare Employer Research Initiative: Identifying Opportunities for Workforce Diversity in the New Hampshire Healthcare Workforce (2011-2016) https://heller.brandeis.edu/iasp/publications/index.html

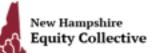[vii] http://cfs.cbcs.usf.edu/projects-research/_docs/CLASStandardsCLCAssessmentTool_FINAL.pdf

[viii] http://www.familyschool.org.au/files/2713/8811/6325/School_Assessment_Tool.pdf

[ix] http://www.familyschool.org.au/files/3013/8451/8364/Family-school_partnerships_framework.pdf

[x] https://heller.brandeis.edu/iasp/pdfs/jobs/culturally-effective.pdf

New Hampshire Equity Collective

Element	Plan / Policy States	Implemented / Evidence of Action	Date, Source, Example	Responsible Party	Comments
I. Leadership					
1 The organization offers effective quality care/services which are responsive to the cultural (and health) beliefs and practices of the individuals served.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
2 The organization's commitment to cultural effectiveness is an explicit part of the mission statement.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
3 The organization's cultural effectiveness goals are an explicit part of the strategic plan.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
4 Leadership evaluates the culturally effective organization framework elements on an ongoing basis including how the elements are being implemented within the organization.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
5 Results of formal organizational performance assessments toward reaching cultural effectiveness goals are gathered and are reported to the board of directors on an ongoing basis.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
6 The organization annually allocates resources to meeting the cultural and linguistic needs of its clients, and to improving its cultural effectiveness.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			

Notes

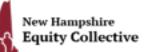| Element	Plan / Policy States	Implemented / Evidence of Action	Date, Source, Example	Responsible Party	Comments
II. Policies and Procedures					
1 Culturally effective organization framework elements are regularly evaluated and revisited for quality improvement; the frequency is specified.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
2 All staff are provided with culturally effective organization framework-oriented feedback in their individual performance reviews.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
3 Organization policy states: 1) a specified frequency of regular and ongoing diversity training for staff and leaders; 2) what is included in the staff diversity training; and 3) how the training is evaluated.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
4 Formal policies are established to ensure all internal and external interpreters are qualified and proficient for their work by setting and meeting competency and training requirements.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
5 The grievance resolution process is easily accessible, identifies the individual responsible for handling grievances, and clearly details the maximum length of time for grievances to be addressed.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
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Element	Plan / Policy States	Implemented / Evidence of Action	Date, Source, Example	Responsible Party	Comments
III. Data Collection and Analysis					
1 The organization collects race, ethnicity, and language data to measure and support enhanced cultural effectiveness.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
2 Data is stratified by race, ethnicity, language (and other relevant demographic variables) to identify and address disparities as part of all quality improvement efforts.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
3 Staff are trained on the proper collection of data to ensure data quality.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
4 Community demographic data is used in program planning and service delivery; how is specified.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
5 Staff members provide feedback on interactions with individuals who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), or other communication access needs, and minority populations to improve interactions and services; the process for how and when that feedback can be provided is clear.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			

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	Element	Plan / Policy States	Implemented / Evidence of Action	Date, Source, Example	Responsible Party	Comments
	IV. Community Engagement					
1	Community input is used in organizational decision-making.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
2	Community needs are assessed; how and when are specified (e.g., the federal government requires a community health needs assessment of 501(c)(3) hospital organizations every three years.)	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
3	Organization collaborates with other community based partners and stakeholders in discussing community assets and challenges and sharing best practices related to: 1) capturing community demographics; 2) strategies on the dissemination of findings; and 3) meeting needs.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
4	Needs assessment findings are communicated to community leaders/members and others to help interpret and validate findings and receive input on implications for service delivery.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
5	Community leaders/members are valued for their contributions and compensated for their input/feedback/skills/time.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			

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	Element	Plan / Policy States	Implemented / Evidence of Action	Date, Source, Example	Responsible Party	Comments
	V. Language and Communication Access					
1	All staff within the organization know how to accommodate the communication access needs of individuals who call or come in to the organization.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
2	Notice of the availability of communication access accommodations for any public meeting, forum, or conference is included in all announcements, fliers or other marketing materials about the event.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
3	The care/services are provided in the client's preferred language.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
4	The organization offers communication access and language assistance at no cost to the client.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
5	The organization uses community demographic data, including knowledge of the languages used within the service community, to guide which languages must be prioritized for any translated material and signage in the organization.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
6	Regular and ongoing training is provided for all staff to increase awareness, understanding and appropriate utilization of language assistance services, policies, and procedures (including program directors, point-of-contact staff and agency-appointed "gatekeepers").	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			

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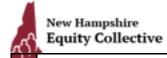
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7	The organization hires bilingual/multilingual staff members; the process for how is clear and includes an assessment of competence including degree of language fluency for speaking, reading and writing.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
8	Organizational strategies are in place to enable individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and other communication access needs, to file complaints and/or grievances with the organization.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			

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New Hampshire Equity Collective

Element	Plan / Policy States	Implemented / Evidence of Action	Date, Source, Example	Responsible Party	Comments
VI. Staff Cultural Competence					
1 The organization offers *understandable* quality care/services responsive to diverse cultural beliefs and practices (e.g. health beliefs).	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
2 The organization offers *respectful* quality care/services responsive to diverse cultural beliefs and practices (e.g. health beliefs).	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
3 The delivery of care and services is individualized to meet patients'/clients' cultural needs.	___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
4 The organization values and supports the professional development of its employees by providing regular and ongoing education and training in diversity and leadership.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
5 Cultural competency training, mentoring, and coaching for all levels of staff are provided on a regular basis.	___Yes ___Partially ___No	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress			
6 Cultural competence (with indicators/metrics) is incorporated into regular staff evaluations and performance reviews.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
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	VII. Workforce Diversity and Inclusion					
1	The board reflects the community's demographic composition to ensure that community needs, cultural views, and expectations will be represented at the leadership level during strategic planning and throughout the plan's implementation.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
2	Diverse staff, including members of diverse population groups, are recruited for positions at all levels within the organization. For management and advanced skill positions, search firms and recruiters are required to present a field of candidates that reflects the diversity of the community.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
3	The organization recruits staff that represent the service population by intentionally advertising job opportunities in non-traditional outlets (e.g., social media networks, publications, professional organizations' email listservs, job boards, local schools, faith organizations, training programs, minority health fairs), in other languages (spoken/foreign or signed) that correspond to community needs, and via various media (print, broadcast, video/vlog).	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			
4	The organization engages in targeted retention and employee career promotion efforts to build and maintain workforce diversity at all levels, including offering diverse individuals internal promotions and other opportunities for upward mobility before seeking external candidates.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			

5	The organization places priority on hiring members of staff with added bilingual or multilingual qualifications when the service population includes people with diverse language needs.	___Yes ___Partially ___No ___Not Sure	___Not Yet ___Just Starting ___In progress ___Well on Way			

Notes