



### Cultural Competence

 Mederos, F., & Woldegiorgis, I. (2003). Beyond cultural competence: What child protection managers need to know and do. *Child Welfare*, 82(2), 125-42.

#### WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

This journal article addresses the role of child protection managers in creating systemic change for enhanced cultural competency. The authors present three models for culturally competent management practice, describe the related planning and implementation strategies, and detail the costs, benefits, and challenges associated with this type of systemic change.

#### WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

Racial disproportionality and disparity exists in child protection services and often there are insufficient staff and training resources to address these issues.

Integration of culturally competent practices requires a commitment of time and resources. Benefits include increased flexibility, sophistication, responsiveness to community needs, improved communication, and enhanced agency image. Costs include allocation of resources and staff, apprehension and concerns about new roles and partners, and a lack of comprehensive guidelines. Below are the three models for cultural competence discussed:

Cultural Sensitivity Model	Self-Reflective Cultural Sensitivity Model	Cultural Sensitivity Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop understanding of values</li> <li>- Modify existing services to better serve target population</li> <li>- Focus groups, collaborative</li> <li>- Re-train &amp; empower staff</li> <li>- Partner with community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing personal self-inventory</li> <li>- Openness about personal &amp; organizational values</li> <li>- Group inquiry in safe environment</li> <li>- Work teams &amp; planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undo institutional power/privilege</li> <li>- Empower other groups</li> <li>- Reexamine core mission</li> <li>- Evaluation &amp; feedback</li> <li>- Create safe &amp; supportive environments, not oppressive</li> </ul>

The chart below shows the suggested steps for planning and implementing a cultural competence model:

Strategic Plan Step	Specific Tasks/Purpose
Definition of Culture	Create a common language and awareness of populations and issues to address; should be flexible.
Organizational Cultural Competence Self-Assessment	Identify strengths and areas that need to be improved, acknowledge lack of knowledge
Vision Process	Encourage ambitious and broad thinking about future goals (do not critique at this time)
Assessment of "Environmental Factors"	Generate a list of potential obstacles
Goal Setting & Planning Process	Turn vision into concrete goals, and develop a detailed plan for resources, responsibilities and timelines
Implementation	Monitor timelines and progress, and make on-going revisions to goals/activities

#### WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

-  Managers should take on greater leadership in relation to developing more culturally competent services.
-  Agencies should prioritize staff diversity, as it is a necessary building block for moving towards greater cultural competence. Organizations should develop and implement a strategic plan for increased cultural competence, as it can help them become more sophisticated in their work and gain greater public support.