



# Cultural Competency

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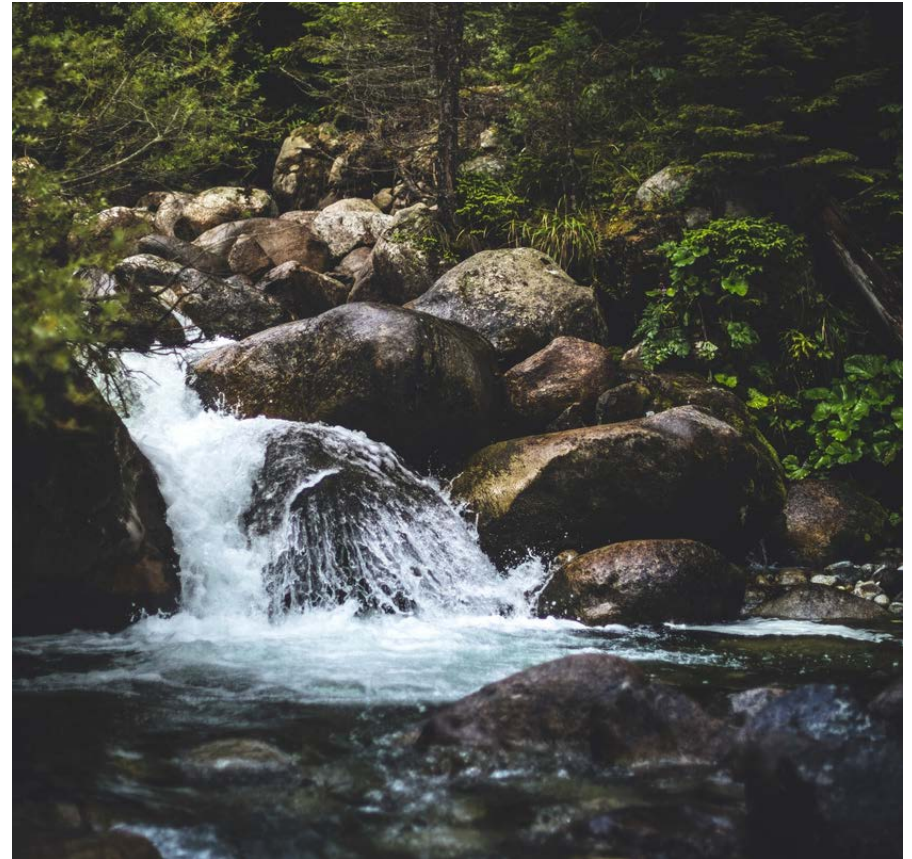
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# Introduction

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At Optum Alaska we strive to practice and promote culturally sensitive and appropriate care.

We are pleased to highlight some information and key resources to help you on your journey, including free continuing education e-learning programs available through the Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.





# What is Culture?



The integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group.

Terry Cross, et al (1989)

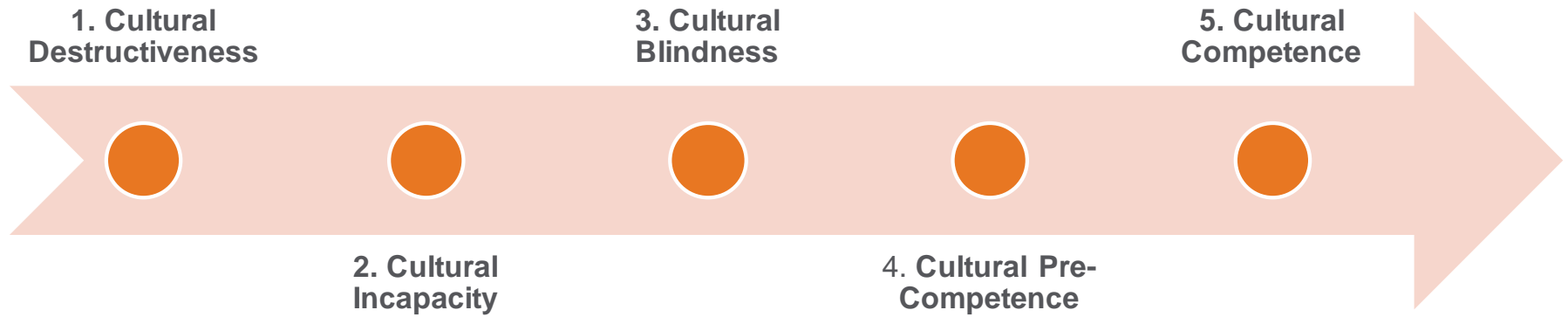
# Cultural Competency Continuum

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- Cultural competency may be viewed in terms of a **continuous progression of growth, development and change**.
- It is important both for individuals and organizations to continuously and intentionally work to develop and strengthen competencies in order to provide effective services to diverse populations.
- The continuum ranges from potentially damaging and uninformed practices to constructive and professionally recognized practices that facilitate culturally relevant service delivery.

# Points on the Continuum

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# Cultural Destructiveness

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- The point as which individuals refuse to acknowledge the presence or importance of cultural differences in the service delivery process.
- Disregard for diverse cultures may be seen in behaviors or policies that are damaging to or destructive to cultures and to the individuals living within that culture.

***“We speak English here.”***

# Cultural Incapacity

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- A view in which cultural differences are neither punished nor supported. It is when the individual ignores differences.
- In therapeutic settings this may surface in the form of an overly narrow view of symptoms and associated diagnosis without consideration of cultural factors that may be relevant to the overall understanding of an individual's health, status, strengths and needs.

**“I don't recognize Ancestors being literally present during grief. This sounds like psychosis.”**

# Cultural Blindness

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- Active belief by an individual or organization that cultural differences are of no importance; OR
- Cultural differences may be noted but being color-blind and culture-blind is considered the desired state.

**“Our program is evidence-based. We follow the curriculum. Modifying it would ruin our fidelity.”**

**“Adapt it to culture? Why? We’ve got stats that show the program is effective.”**



# Cultural Pre-competence

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- Recognition and responsiveness to cultural differences along with efforts to address systemic problems through advocacy.
- Pre-competence includes open acknowledgement of the need for cultural competency and active pursuit of current information and training related to diversity.

*“Help me understand how smudging treatment rooms is used by Native people to support health and healing? How can we bring tribal spiritual leaders together with agency leadership so we can be more inclusive of Native healing practices?”*

# Cultural Competence

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- Culture is held in high regard as an aspect of Identity.
- Individuals and organizations may engage in research, develop culturally-informed therapeutic approaches and share their learning with others.
- Evaluation, diagnosis and treatment is always flexible and sensitive to the cultural identity of each individual.
- Individuals within an organization feel safe and inspired to advocate for cultural sensitivity.
- Agencies commit resources (time, money, staff) to exploring and expanding culturally sensitive practices.

# Culturally Competent Care

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Acknowledges and incorporates, at all levels, the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally-unique needs.

Terry Cross, et al (1989)



# Cultural Competency Domains

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**Affective:** Becoming aware and taking ownership of culturally-based attitudes, beliefs or biases

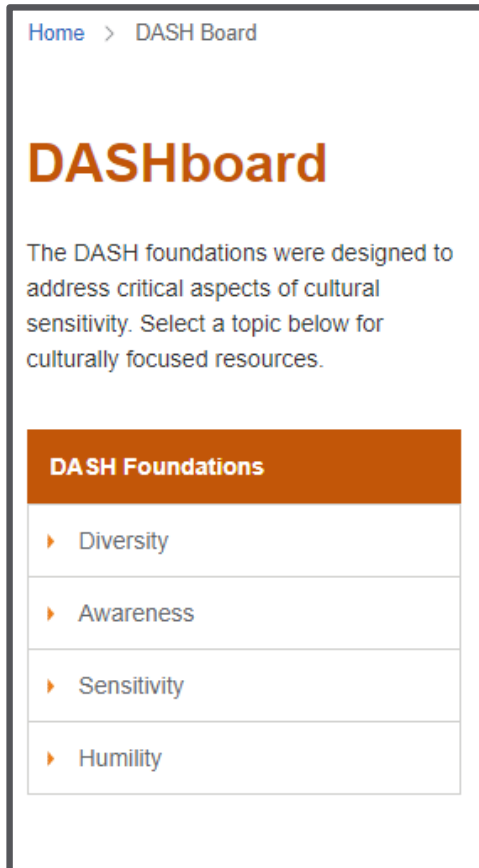
**Cognitive:** Actively learning about the values, beliefs, language, rituals and medical/health practices of cultures in which you live and work.

**Behavioral:** Learning and practicing skills which supporting effective services across cultures

**Relationship:** Understanding and approaching power differences in the context of therapy with humility.

# Optum Alaska DASHBoard

## Coming Soon



Welcome to the new Optum Alaska DASHboard an innovative web platform that offers easy access to knowledge, skills, and resources customized for Alaska Medicaid providers and community partners. This project was founded to ensure the delivery of culturally sensitive care and support for our members and their communities.

The acronym DASH was created to emphasize four key elements of culturally compassionate practice: Diversity, Awareness, Sensitivity, and Humility. Explore the links to the left of your screen for more information concerning these topics.

The vision of Optum Alaska is to promote awareness, recognition, and appreciation of each individual's diverse culture and expression of personal experience. By understanding and respecting a wide variety of perspectives, we deliver products and services that truly matter to those we serve—organizations and individuals who come from all walks of life. Initiatives built to meet the needs of specific groups signify compassion, inclusion, and ensure cultural relevance.



# Resources

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## [nlm.nih.gov/hsrinfo/health\\_literacy.html](https://nlm.nih.gov/hsrinfo/health_literacy.html)

U. S. National Library of Medicine Health Services Research Information Central website. Health Literacy and Cultural Competence information including: News, Data, Tools and Statistics, Guidelines and Journals, Education, Meetings, Conferences and Webinars, Key Organizations.

## [cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/OMH/Downloads/CLAS-Toolkit-12-7-16.pdf](https://cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/OMH/Downloads/CLAS-Toolkit-12-7-16.pdf)

pdf from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) website. A Practical Guide to Implementing the National CLAS Standards: for Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities, People with Disabilities and Sexual and Gender Minorities, December 2016.

See next page for more Resources

# Resources

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## [minorityhealth.hhs.gov/](https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/)

U. S. Department of Health & Human Services - Office of Minority Health website. Information on Cultural Competency, and links to: Center for Linguistic and Cultural Competency in Health Care, National CLAS Standards, Think Cultural Health website, Continuing Education.

## [thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/education](https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/education)

U. S. Department of Health & Human Services website. Information on National CLAS Standards, Education including **free continuing education e-learning programs**, Resources to: Recorded Presentations, Quarterly Newsletters, Case Study Video Units and more.

# Thank You

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