

Cultural and Linguistic Standards

SECTION 9: CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC STANDARDS

9.0 General Overview

The population of California is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse in the United States. The Fresno County Mental Health Plan (FCMHP) is committed to providing mental health services in a manner that considers the cultural and linguistic needs of our beneficiary population.

9.1 Cultural and Linguistic Standards

Mental health services will be presented in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. The FCMHP will support the health providers in the delivery of these services through training, services, materials, and consultation.

9.2 Cultural and Linguistic Definitions

9.2.1 Culture

Culture is the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, communication, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group. Culture defines the preferred ways for meeting needs. A particular individual's cultural identity may involve the following parameters among others: ethnicity, race, language of origin, acculturation, gender, socioeconomic class, religious/spiritual beliefs, and sexual preference.

9.2.2 Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural sensitivity is the awareness of the differences between and the nuances of one's own and other cultures. When providing services to clients of a different culture, it is important to be sensitive to their needs and expectations in order to provide the best level of service.

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9.2.3 Cultural Appropriateness

Cultural appropriateness is demonstrating both sensitivity to cultural differences and similarities and effective use of cultural symbols to communicate a message.

9.2.4 Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is a set of academic and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups. This requires a willingness and ability to draw on community-based values, traditions, and customs and to work with knowledgeable persons from the community in developing focused interventions, communications, and other supports.

9.2.5 Culturally Competent Mental Health System

A culturally competent mental health system is one that 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 to services to meet culturally unique needs.

9.3 Cultural Competence Training

The FCMHP provides Cultural Competence training on a periodic basis, which is open to Organizational contract providers and their staff.

9.4 Language Assistance Services

Providers who work with beneficiaries who are limited-English proficient (LEP) or non-English speaking must use either bilingual staff members proficient in the language of the beneficiary or interpreter services. Interpretation/Translation services shall be made available in all languages, not just the threshold languages of Fresno County (which are English, Spanish, and Hmong.)

The County of Fresno will share its' list of certified interpreters to providers upon request, but the provider will be responsible for the cost of these services. Providers may use telephone translation services for

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making appointments or getting information from beneficiaries, but will likewise be fully responsible for the cost of these services. In no case will the beneficiary be billed for the use of interpreter services.

The FCMHP strongly discourages the use of minors, family members, guardians, conservators, or friends as interpreters. If the beneficiary insists on providing his/her own interpreter, the provider will document his/her request in the beneficiary's record and have the beneficiary sign both a release and a third party confidentiality acknowledgement. These forms will be filed in the beneficiary's medical record.

Providers who work with LEP or non-English speaking beneficiaries will have notices prominently posted at their practice site(s) explaining that interpreter services are available at no cost to the beneficiary.

9.5 Client Forms

All written communication with beneficiaries must be translated into the beneficiary's primary language to ensure that all beneficiaries receive information in the language which they understand. Examples include consent for treatment forms, medication consent forms, and material explaining the side effects of medication.

9.6 Consumer Handbook

The Consumer Handbook includes a directory of services and forms for grievance, appeal and fair hearings. The FCMHP will make these materials available in English, Spanish, and Hmong. Providers may download copies from the Department's website at <http://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/behavioral-health/managed-care/consumer-and-provider-downloads>.

9.7 Compliance with Interpreter Services

Services offered through the FCMHP are subject to Office of Civil Rights mandates. Providers are expected to comply with these standards. Failure to comply may be used as grounds for termination of the provider's agreement with the FCMHP.

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