

# Section 7.4.1A

## Diversity

## Cultural Competency

## Health & Safety

### **STATEMENT**

The Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities is committed to creating an environment where all people feel safe to express culturally based values, perceptions, or experiences throughout its operations. The mission and vision of the Board is the foundation from which our cultural competency is built. Recognizing the complexity of the issues involved, this plan is created to increase cultural competence across all staff and organizational levels. Understanding that many different strata comprise the concept of 'culture', such as shared history, physical environment, space, language, ethnicity/race, religion (spiritual beliefs), sexual orientation, sex/gender roles, socioeconomic status, and age, the Board also recognizes that culture can influence issues related to service provision, including barriers to service, attitudes towards services, beliefs about specific disabilities, and help-seeking behaviors.

### **CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

Cultural competency is the ability and willingness of an organization to interact effectively with people from different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. It is a set of compatible behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enables an organization to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. It values the importance of culture and is responsible to diversity in the delivery of services to all segments of the population at all levels.

Cultural competence activities include the development of skills through training, use of self-assessment tools, and implementation of objectives to ensure that policies and procedures, as well as service delivery practices are responsive to the culture and diversity within the populations served. It requires all levels of the organization to adhere to the principles of conduct established, and reflect that the core values of the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities are based upon the principles of choice, dignity, and respect, accountability, integrity, and stewardship.

## **PURPOSE, AUTHORITY & STRUCTURE**

The Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan will be used to ensure that service delivery to all persons is delivered in a culturally sensitive manner. This plan is comprehensive and covers all levels of the organization, governance, administration, and staff.

The Board's Superintendent is delegated the authority and responsibility to integrate cultural competency and diversity plan throughout the organization.

In efforts to foster an environment of culturally competent service delivery, all staff will utilize the following elements to address cultural competency for children and adults receiving services, family members, fellow employees, and other stakeholders:

- Recognize that cultural issues are not limited to ethnicity considerations, but may also include religion, disability, ruralism and or other issues;
- Accept that there are differences in values and customs, while recognizing similarities among individuals, employee, customers, and vendors;
- Support a work environment free from all forms discrimination, including harassment of any nature;
- Develop a workforce which reflects the community;
- Conduct cultural diversity/competency training which fosters inclusion, tolerance, and respect for diversity and;
- Encourage a climate of cooperation in the work environment that promotes a positive attitude toward the provision of services.

Administration shall ensure that the Board provides adequate training in the areas related to cultural issues within each program. Workplace environments, and in the supervision and selection of staff. The key components involved include:

- JCBDD will advertise job openings in places and publications culturally relevant to our population;
- Staff Training and In-servicing: On cultural diversity and competency for all new employees and periodically with all employees for enhancement; CORSA classes relating to identifying and eliminating harassment/violence in the workplace; staff training on Alyce; Managers and Direct Care staff training in person-centered thinking; SSA staff trained in person-centered thinking and approaches and Appalachian Sensitivity; School consults with and utilizes

services from the local Center of Programs for the Deaf and the School for the Blind and has a VI teacher on staff.

- Identify cultural and language needs of those we serve through the discovery phase of person centered planning;
- In line with the JCBDD Accessibility Plan implementation, evaluate all programs and administrative operations to determine if they represent best practices in meeting the diversity expectations of those we serve;
- Participate in/sponsor awareness activities which promote cultural diversity (i.e. DD Awareness Month, Disability Simulation Day; Special Olympics).

Discrimination is a violation of state/federal civil rights laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. The JCBDD is committed to providing:

- A workplace free from discrimination based on individual's protected-class status of race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or ability to pay;
- A workplace free from harassment, including sexual, racial, and cultural harassment;
- Affirmative Action and equal employment opportunities in all phases of employment through recruitment, retention, and advancement of culturally diverse and qualified people and utilization of job-related criteria in making employment decisions.

All persons served and their families, Board employees, customers and vendors are expected to treat each other with dignity respect. If anyone believes that he/she is a target of behavior that violates this plan or is witness to such conduct, he/she has the right to follow the complaint procedures as outlined in the Board's Policy against Harassment.

