

Best Practices

The Culturally Proficient Professional

Assesses culture. The culturally proficient professional is aware of her own culture and the effect it may have on the people in her work setting. She learns about the culture of the organization and the cultures of the clients, and anticipates how they will interact with, conflict with, and enhance one another.

Values diversity. The culturally proficient professional welcomes a diverse group of clients into the work setting and appreciates the challenges diversity brings. He shares this appreciation with others, developing a learning relationship with the clients.

Manages the dynamics of difference. The culturally proficient professional recognizes that conflict is a normal and natural part of life. She develops skills to manage conflict in a positive way. She also helps the clients to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in culture.

Adapts to diversity. The culturally proficient professional commits to the continuous learning that is necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences. He enhances the substance and structure of his work so that all of it is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.

Institutionalizes cultural knowledge. The culturally proficient professional works to influence the culture of her organization so that its policies and practices are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency. She also takes advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge about her colleagues, their managers, the clients, and the communities from which they come. She creates opportunities for these groups to learn about one another and to engage in ways that honor who they are and challenge them to be more.