

Supporting WA State Behavioral Health Providers to Optimize Telehealth in Response to COVID-19

Q&A from BHI Telehealth Training Session #13

Date: June 19, 2020

Title: Telehealth: How can We Improve Health Equity and Cultural Competency in the Era of Covid-19?

Presenter: Karen Hill PhD, ANP-C, Health Management Associates, Senior Consultant

Q: Do you have any guidance or things that we should consider in implementing and updating policies that apply to behavioral health agencies? Our goal is to make our policies more culturally considerate and equitable to all persons served and coworkers.

A: There are several important action items that organizations can take to address cultural sensitivity.

- 1) Develop a cultural competency policy (sample) <https://health.hawaii.gov/healthequity/cultural-competency-policy/>

Visit

- 2) CLAS <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas/standards>
- 3) <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-training/tpp-and-paf-resources/cultural-competence/index.html>

Other suggestions:

- Diverse workforce
- Training and professional development
- Position descriptions and performance evaluations
- Linguistic competence and Language Access
- Anti-discrimination policies
- Agency/program has a mission statement which states that all persons shall receive appropriate services. ____
- Agency/program has a list of interpreters for both manually coded and spoken communication available. ____
- Agency/program has a policy for handling staff members' inappropriate language or behavior, related to race, ethnicity, gender, ability, or sexual orientation. ____
- Agency/program actively recruits bilingual employees. ____
- Agency/program actively recruits employees from culturally diverse populations. ____
- Agency/program actively recruits employees who have experience working with populations reflecting diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. ____
- Agency/program has an equal opportunity employment (EOE) policy. ____
- Agency/program has persons representing various culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in leadership roles. _

- Agency/program promotes persons who speak with accents or dialects based on job performance, not based on use of Mainstream American English. ____
 - Agency/program provides feedback to all staff based on job performance, not based on use of Mainstream American English. ____
 - Agency/program provides materials that are health literate. ____
 - Agency/program provides health coverage for an employee’s domestic/lifetime partner. ____ a
 - Agency/program accommodates space or time off for religious observances that are not part of the work calendar.
- 4) Hire for Fit: ask questions during the hiring process to make sure that potential applicants have a “share mental” model and approach to cultural competency.
 - 5) Actively seek diverse applicants
 - 6) Make sure that signage in the organization reflects ALL types of diversity [age, ethnicity, hearing impaired, disability, religion etc]. When people must see themselves in the space it increases their sense of belonging and acceptance.
 - 7) Consider examining the mission and goals and if cultural humility and sensitivity are NOT explicitly stated, they should be.
 - 8) Develop metrics for tracking. For example, patient and satisfaction surveys,
 - 9) Ask patients what THEY think would help them feel more comfortable.

Hope this helps and Be Well!

Karen

For more information, please see:

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Behavioral Health Providers across Washington State are on the front lines providing critical mental health and substance use treatment during an unprecedented public health emergency. State and federal guidelines continue to evolve so that more providers may use telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic. Organizations from across the state have responded in amazing fashion to assure that providers across the continuum and age spectrum have access to information and resources necessary to help you begin or expand your use of telehealth.

<https://bhi-telehealthresource.uwmedicine.org/Pages/About-Us.aspx>