



Culture Connections

November 2020 News & Updates

We first want to acknowledge the ongoing concerns regarding COVID-19 and affirm that we are hopeful and solution focused in supporting our community of providers and clients. We have made temporary changes in our services to reflect the needs and the directives from the CDC and state, and we encourage you to stay connected via our webinars, newsletters, web-site and via email/phone for updates and support.

Our mission is to improve mental health services and outcomes in northern NJ by enhancing the cultural competence of mental health professionals...

And we're excited to share with you some news about our program and team, as well as some resources and upcoming services!

Check out the news below and online for more updates. Have a great day, full of healthy connections! #WhereHopeMeetsPossibility

Visit our Website

Call to Action

Advocate for Racial Equality and Justice

Position on Systemic Racism:

- NJ Cultural Competence Training Centers' response to George Floyd's murder and the continued advocacy for the dismantling of systemic racism and injustices: [Response to Floyd murder and systemic racism](#)
- Response to Racial Injustice: [A message from Family Connections' CEO Jacques Hryshko](#)

Increase Knowledge and Access During COVID: [Resources and Information for Our Community](#)

Upcoming Training

FALL TRAINING VIRTUAL EVENTS

December 15-16, 2020

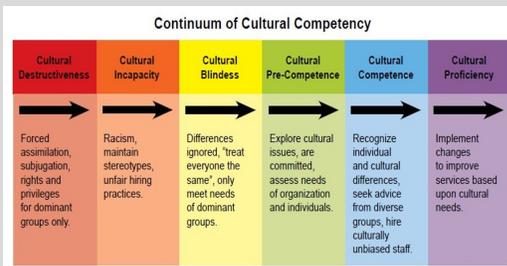
Is Allyship Enough? The Interconnected System of Oppression and Privilege and the Role of Allies in Social Justice

Presented by: Tawanda Hubbard, MSW, DSW, LCSW

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Stay tuned [here](#) for information, updates and registration.

Striving for Cultural Proficiency in 2020!



Native American Heritage Month

Here are some resources to increase your cultural competency with colleagues and communities you serve, and to motivate you to continue to be aware of the possible needs of clients who identify as Native and Indigenous people.

Learning Resources:

- [National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center](#)
- [Perspectives on Native Voting](#)
- [PBS Documentaries for Native American Heritage Month](#)
- [Native and Indigenous Communities and Mental Health](#)

Have resources to inform organizations and colleagues about these various cultures and their health data? Share [here](#) for our growing resource library.



Service Spotlight

"Decreasing the Social Taboo Around Cultural Competence"

Organizational leaders can find themselves in places where expectations paralyze them, especially in an era of social justice. We asked Kim Ruoff, Director of Human Resources at The Center for Great Expectations in Somerset, NJ, and DMHAS Multicultural Services Advisory Committee member, her perspective on navigating that reality:

How does the leadership community address cross-cultural relationships and cultural competence in an organization?

"Cultural literacy is a process that takes time and individuals are at different stages of their journey. When we, as leaders, collectively recognize the importance of diversity in the workplace, communication is clearer and

more consistent; and awareness and tangible implementation increases. This recognition and shift in communication also provides a "safe space" for us and staff to voice our individual viewpoints and concerns. At CGE, for example, after two town hall meetings this year for staff where we focused on creating an open and safe place to discuss cultural issues, the result was the development of a Social Justice Committee that is committed to providing oversight and suggestions on improving diversity throughout our organization. Next we're partnering with Culture Connections to launch an organizational cultural climate survey to help us identify key areas for improvement."

Is being culturally proficient (having expertise or achieved mastery) a destination or a journey for leaders in a workplace?

"We have to be realistic. We live in a country that is wonderfully diverse. It is impossible to be fully proficient in all cultures. However, this does not excuse us from making an effort to be culturally sensitive and mindfully appropriate regarding our differences. Accordingly, organizations should set expectations that are attainable for their staff when implementing change efforts. Promoting environments that embrace diversity should be imbedded in the workplace. To achieve that, we all must work collaboratively to bring attention to and diminish cultural disparities."

Why is the work around organizational and individual cultural competence important to you as a Multicultural Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) member?

"There is much work to do. I believe this begins with awareness and then taking practical steps toward implementing positive transformation in our organizations and society overall. Serving as a DMHAS Multicultural Services Advisory Committee member has provided specific opportunities to continue discussions and brainstorm ideas on driving positive diversity endeavors. It is helpful to hear the challenges and successes in other organizations so that they may be considered when tackling cultural issues in our agency.

By providing forums and opportunities for discussion, we help decrease the social taboo of the subject and hopefully grow into a kinder and more inclusive society. Intentional opportunities for discussion and action will hopefully drive productive change."

Learn more about [CGE](#) and about [MSAC](#).

Learn more about how cultural competency shapes the [Family Connections team and services](#).