

# **Demographic Changes: Providing Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Consumers from Diverse Cultural and Ethnic Backgrounds**

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# Overview

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## Purpose:

This webinar is designed to broaden the scope of cultural competence and understanding cultural diversity and its complexity for vocational rehabilitation counseling professionals.

# Overview

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## ***Objectives will focus on:***

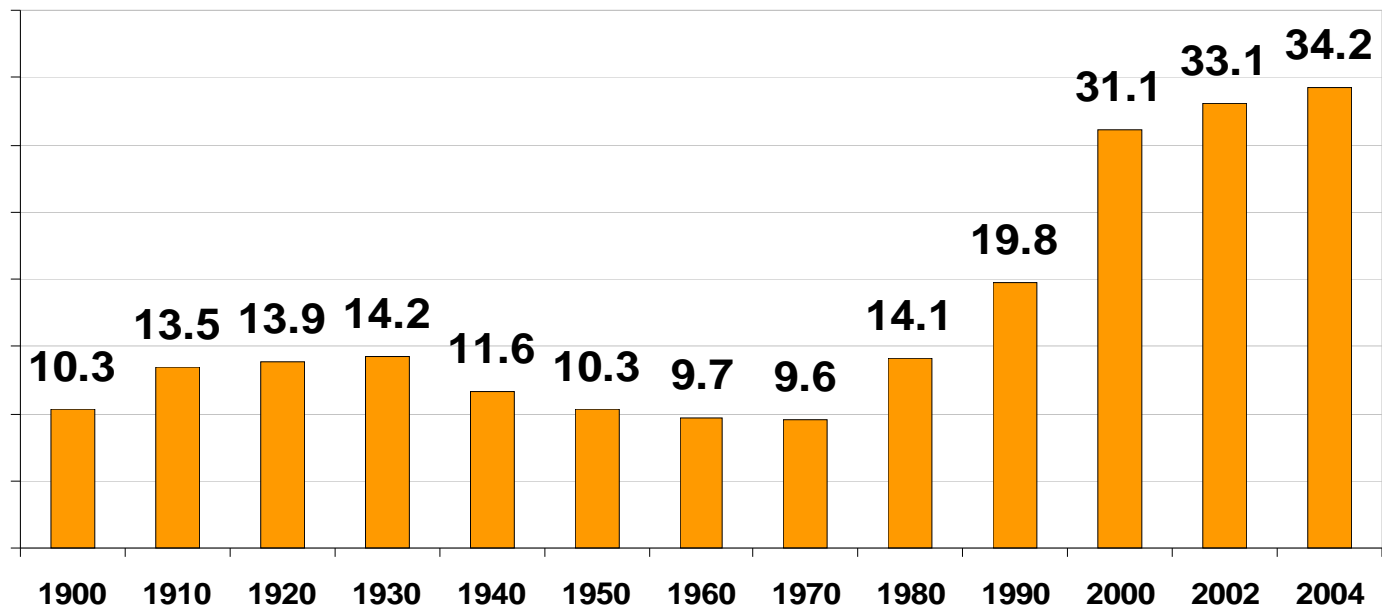
- ***AWARENESS*** of demographic trends in the U.S., in particular in the Southeast region;
- ***DEFINE*** cultural competence in relationship to work environments;
- ***ASSESS*** self-skills in developing helping relationships across cultures and race;
- ***CONSIDERATION*** of cultural diversity for vocational rehabilitation counseling professionals.

# Demographic Changes of the U.S population

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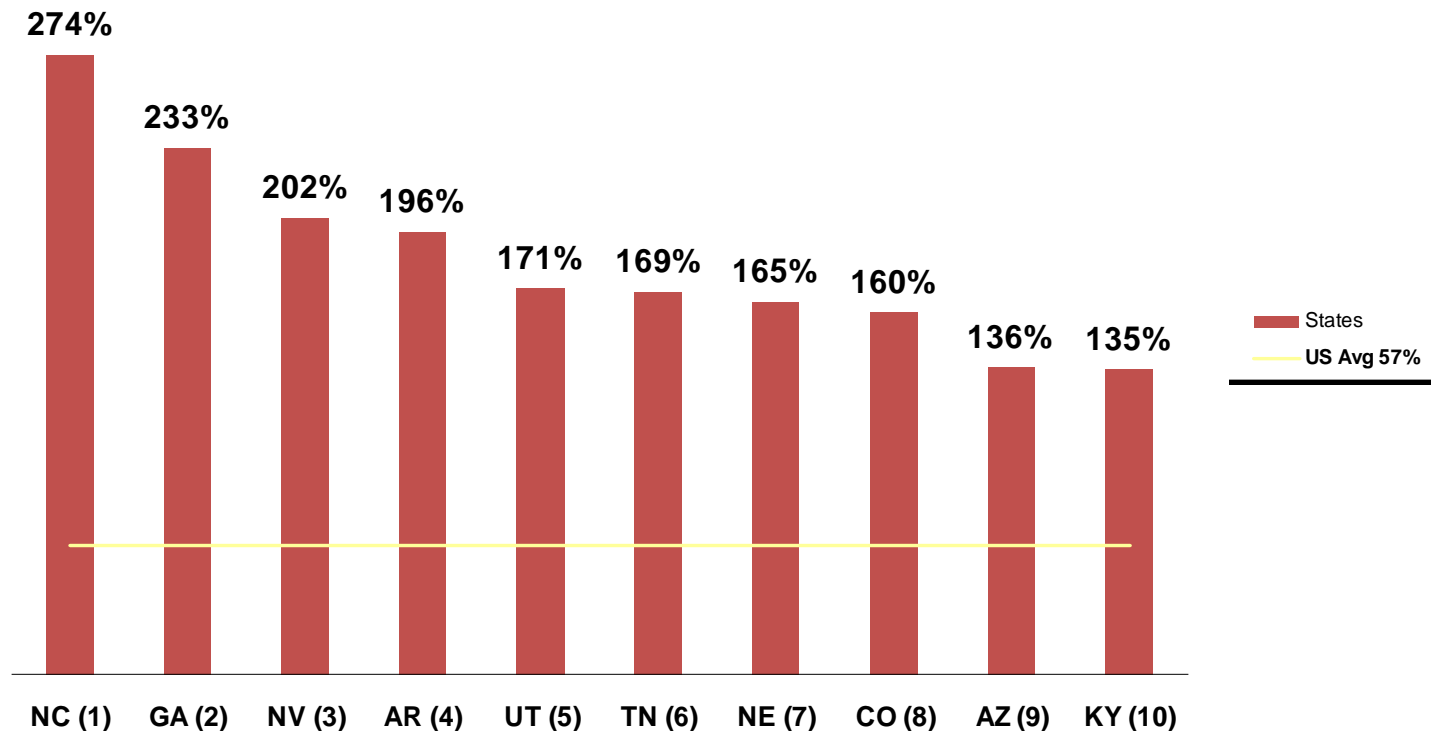
**It is projected that by the year 2020, --- over 30% of the new workers entering into the labor force will be people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds  
--- also classified as people from minority backgrounds.**

# Immigration Population, 1900-2004



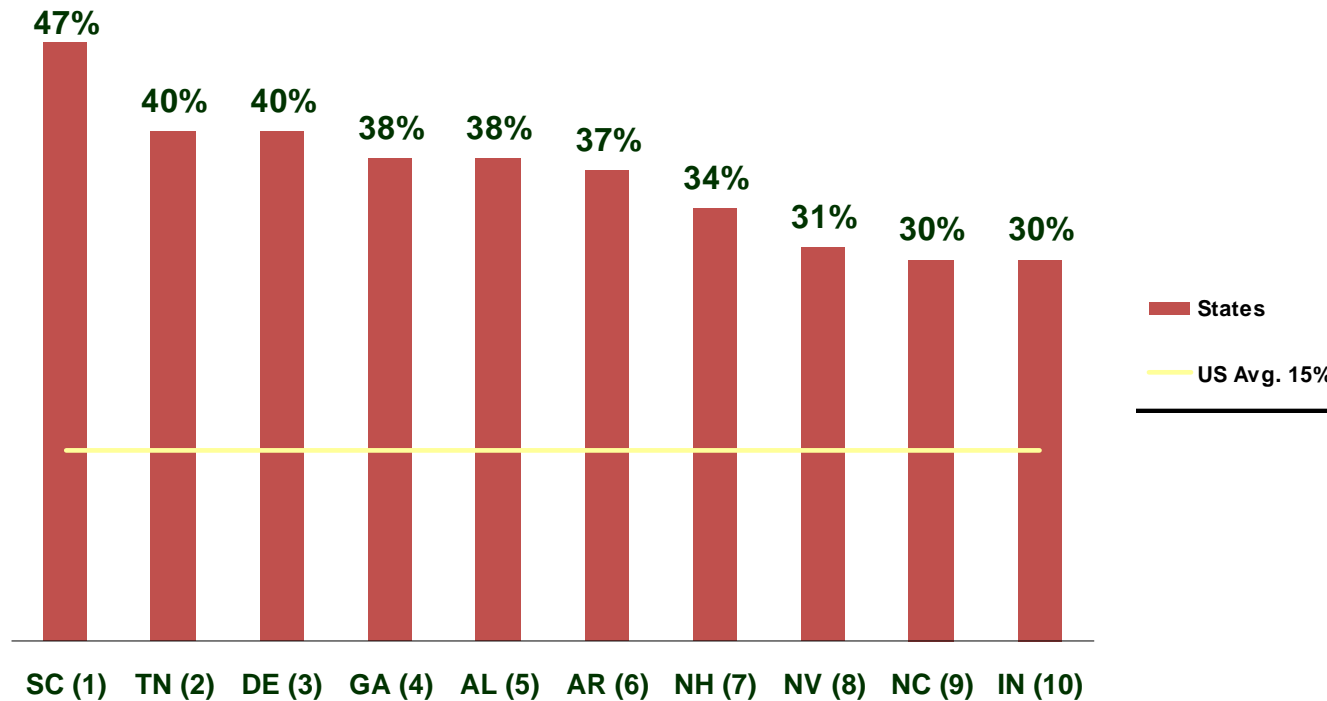
**Source:** Center for Immigration Studies; U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey

# States with Fastest Growing Immigrant Populations, 1990-2000



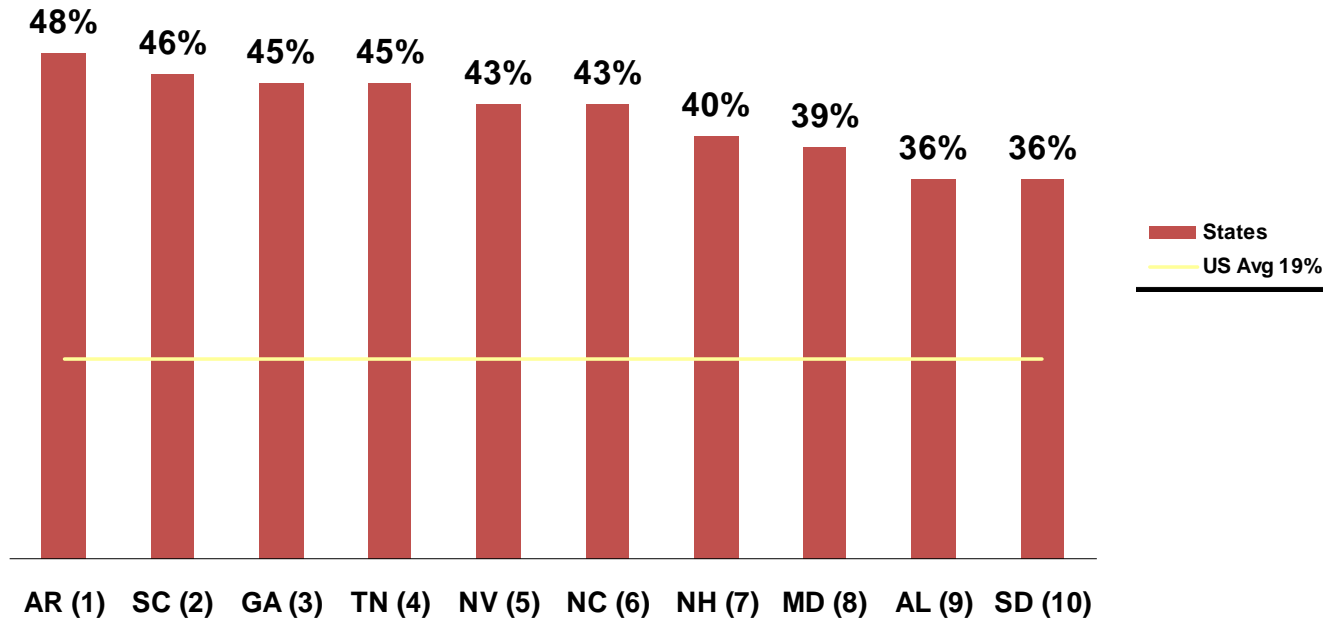
**Source:** Center for Immigration Studies; U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey

# States with Fastest Growing Immigrant Populations, 2000-2005



**Source:** Center for Immigration Studies; U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey

# States with Fastest Growing Hispanic Populations, 2000-2005



**Source:** Center for Immigration Studies; U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey

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# Why Cultural Competence?

# Rational for Cultural Competence

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- **To increase self-awareness and understanding of “culture” in providing quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities in the southeast region.**
- **To enhance cultural responsiveness in order to be aware of, and capable of functioning in, the context of “cultural difference.”**

# Rational...

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- To develop strong alliances among VR and partner agencies and professionals, consumers and their family participants.
- To respond to the current and projected demographic changes in the southeast region.
- To eliminate long-standing inequalities in participation and provision of services to consumers from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- To improve quality and effectiveness of VR primary services outcomes: employment outcomes and independent living.
- To provide an understanding that meets State and Federal legislative regulations and accreditation mandates for VR service providers.

# What is Culture?

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**Also.....**

***CULTURE is an integrated pattern of human behaviors which includes but are not limited to a way of living; values, beliefs, customs, standards, language, thinking patterns, behavioral norms, communications styles, etc.***

**Culture guides decisions and actions of a group through time and generations.**

# Cultural Diversity in our Communities

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**We All belong to some cultural group!**

## **Obvious Manifestations:**

- **National origin and language**
- **Race and Ethnicity**
- **Gender**
- **Religion**
- **Socio-economic status**

# Culture of Origin

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**“One’s culture of origin provides the person with a basic understanding and worldview.**

**- It provides the means to perceive and explain our experiences.**

**- It teaches about customs, philosophy, and behavior.”**

# Cultural Diversity

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## Less Obvious Manifestations:

- Age
- Education
- Mobility
- Perception of life events (including perceived disabilities, health issues, etc.)
- Worldview

# The Iceberg Concept of Culture

race .. ethnicity  
gender .. language  
dress .. age

Tip

eye contact .. facial expressions  
body language .. sense of self  
religious beliefs .. Spirituality  
concept of justice .. value individual vs. group  
notions of modesty .. concept of cleanliness  
emotional responses .. rules for social interaction  
child rearing practices .. decision making process  
approach to problem resolving .. trusting others  
respect toward professionals  
perceptions of health, mental health, illness, disability

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patterns of superior and subordinate roles in relation to status, age, gender,  
socio-economic status and class, etc.

# U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

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## Competence as a:

**“A set of behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency, or program or among individuals, enabling them to function effectively in diverse cultural interactions and similarities within, among, and between groups.”**

# Elements of Cultural Competence

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## Organizational Level:

- Adapt to diversity and cultural contexts of the community served.
- Acquire and apply cultural knowledge.
- Manage the dynamics of “differences.”
- Conduct cultural self-assessment.
- Value diversity in all its forms.

## How can they be implemented?

**Policy + structure + values + services**

# Cultural Competence

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**Cultural Competence is a point on a continuum that represents the**

***POLICIES* and *PRACTICES***

**of an organization, or the**

***VALUES* and *BEHAVIORS***

**of an individual which enable that organization or person to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment.**

# Competence

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- **Competence is a dynamic process which requires consistent and ongoing attention.**
- **It implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and as an organization, within the context of cultural beliefs, behaviors and need presented by consumers and other communities.**

# Essential Elements in a Culturally Competent System

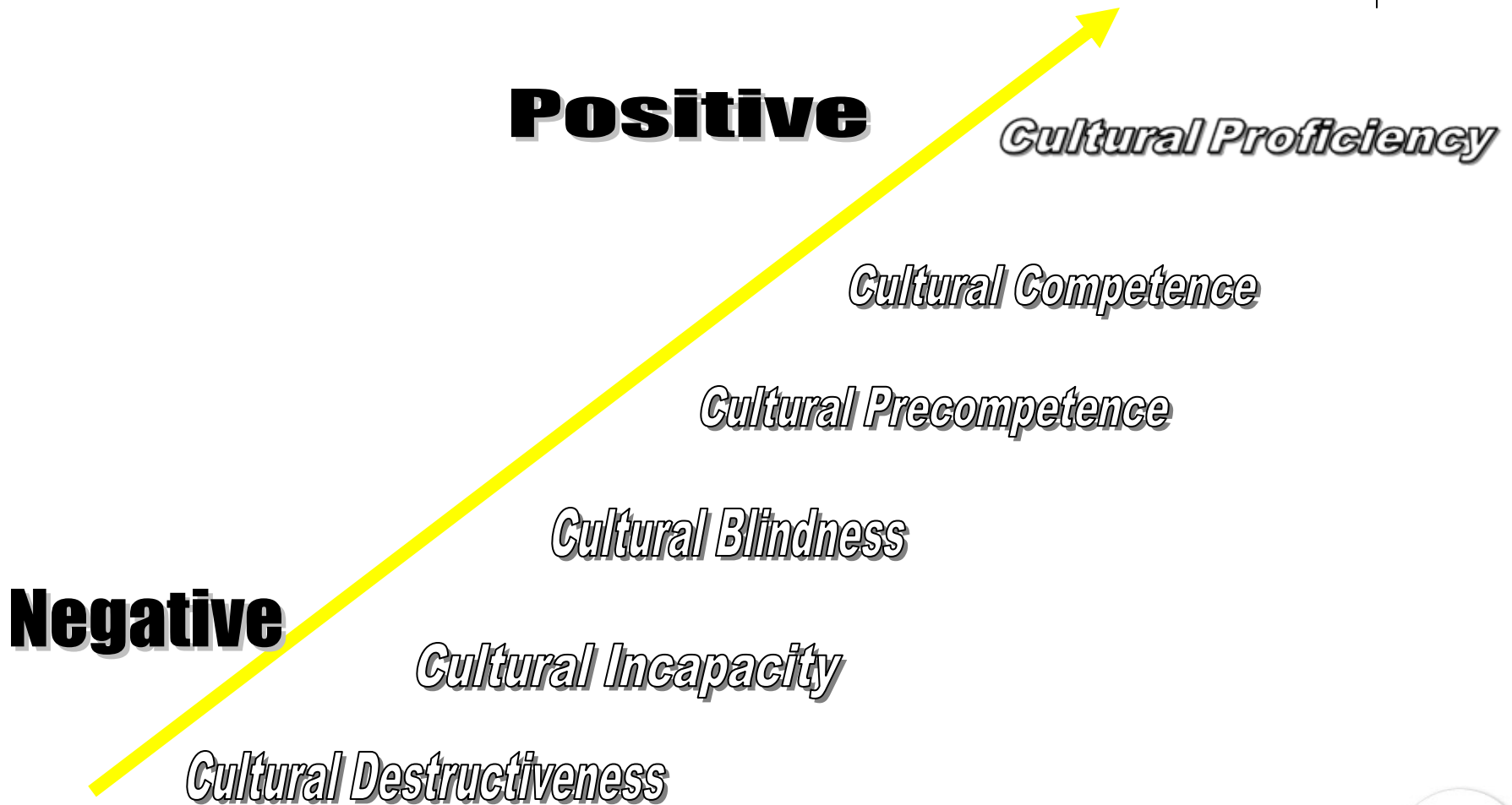
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**At the organization's levels include:**

- 1. Policy making**
  - 2. Administrative guidelines**
  - 3. Practice in service delivery**
  - 4. Consumer/Client and family inclusion**
  - 5. Community outreach**
- ... and should be reflected in its attitude, structure, policies and services.**

# The Cultural Competence Continuum

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# Cultural Competence Continuum

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- **Definitions:**
  - **Cultural Destructiveness**: forced assimilation, subjugation, rights and privileges for dominant groups only
  - **Cultural Incapacity**: racism, maintain stereotypes, unfair hiring practices and services
  - **Cultural Blindness**: differences ignored, “treat everyone the same”, only meet needs of dominant groups

# ...Continuum

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**Cultural Pre-competence: explore cultural issues, are committed, assess needs of organization and individuals**

**Cultural Competence: recognize individual and cultural differences, seek advice from diverse groups, hire culturally unbiased staff**

**Cultural proficiency: implement changes to improve services based upon cultural needs, do research and teach**

# ASSESS

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**Self –skills in the development of helping relationships across cultures and races**

**Cultural Competence Concepts**

# Cultural Awareness

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*Is developing sensitivity and understanding of another cultural and/or ethnic group and it is related to attitudes and values.*

**Requires:**

- **Awareness of who are the community members that need your services and support.**
- **Awareness of your own culture.**
- **Knowledge of your environment.**

# Cultural Sensitivity

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**Is to know and understand that cultural differences as well as similarities exist without assigning values, -- i.e., better or worse; right or wrong -- to those cultural differences.**

# Cultural Biases

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- **Are exhibited when someone is biased due to his/her own learned culture.**
- ***Bias describes tendency or preference toward a particular individual perspective.***

# Cultural Competence Concepts

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- 1. *Cultural Knowledge:*** Individuals know about some cultural characteristics, history, values, beliefs, and behaviors.
- 2. *Cultural Awareness:*** Next stage -- individuals are open to the idea of changing cultural attitudes.

# Cultural Competence Concepts

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- 3. *Cultural Sensitivity:*** Knowing that differences exist between cultures, but not assigning values to the difference.
- 4. *Cultural Competence:*** Brings together the previous stages, and adds operational effectiveness.

# Creating Organizational Culture

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**A culturally competent organization brings together different behaviors, attitudes, and policies and works effectively in cross-cultural settings to produce better results and deliver effective culturally based services.**

# How do we measure cultural competence?

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**Cultural Competency is measure by:**

- 1. The availability of sufficient numbers of duly qualified personnel and consultants for the system to -- provide comparable access to and results from services provided to various communities and populations in the service area of the agency, system or community.**

# How do we measure...

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- 2. The services or plan of action must be based on cultural values of the individual, group or groups of interest;**
- 3. The strategies that comprise the plan of action should be consistent with the values, beliefs and practices of the consumer or cultural group of interest;**

# How do we measure...

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- 4. The consumer and the family must be given due respect in selecting and receiving the services, and**
- 5. Cultural competence requires a thorough understanding of the culture and language of the individual -- if limited English presents a barrier for the consumer and/or family.**

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# A population of interest in the southeast region

# Demographics: Hispanic Population

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- **The Hispanic American population: is the fastest growing and most diverse ethnic group in the U.S.**
- **According to the latest US Census report of 2000 --- and its latest revision (2007) – the U.S. Hispanic or Latino population is projected to grow from:**
  - **31.7 million (12% of the population) in 2000 – to**
  - **98.2 million (24% of the U.S. population) by 2050.**
- **This indicates the Hispanic American population has grown over 7 times ---- and as fast as the rest of the nation --- between 1980 to 1990 and 1990 to 2008.**

# Demographics of Hispanic...

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- **This cultural and ethnic diverse group includes any person from the Spanish speaking Caribbean (Cuban, Puerto Rican and others), Mexican, South or Central American, or other Spanish heritage culture or origin, regardless of race.**
- **According to the population estimates of the U.S. Census Bureau review of 2007, there are approximately 42.6+ million Hispanics in the U.S. (or over 15% of the total population).**

# Important facts when providing VR services to Hispanic Americans with disabilities

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- **“Latino/Hispanic” is not a racial group – it is an ethnic group (including White European, Black, Asian, Indigenous groups of various ethnic groups and “mestisos” or mix-races).**
- **15.3 % --- have some types of disability.**
- **They are mostly affected by what is labeled as “preventable causes of disability.”**

# Important facts when providing VR services to Hispanic Americans with disabilities

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- **Cultural perceptions of disability may cause difficulties in gaining support from the family.**
- **Long-term rehabilitation and lack of coping skills may be treated as a social outcast (labeled as “weak”, “lazy”, “crazy”).**
- **If disability is perceived as something that cannot change.**
- **More efforts are placed on adjusting vs. rehabilitating. Endurance is a cultural value.**

# Important facts when providing VR services to Hispanic Americans with disabilities

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- **Due to the lack of specific social services available to this population in their native countries, a significant number of Hispanic immigrants are not accustomed to -- or prefer not to seek advice or help from outside the family, doctors or clergy.**
- **Traditionally, the Hispanic American nuclear family has been the only source of support and guidance in many different situations.**
- **The extended “family safety-net” is an additional support system and -- has a stress resistance quality.**

# Important facts when providing VR services to Hispanic Americans with disabilities

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- **The idea of needing "professional counseling or social services" has certain negative connotations --- not very appealing to a traditional Hispanic family.**
- **The perception of service systems is directly affected by their cultural values and beliefs.**

# Important facts when providing VR services to Hispanic Americans with disabilities

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- **The family serves as an emotional support system --- in reference to the formation of coping with emotional problems, adjusting to changes and coping with disabilities.**
- **This argument is most common as an attempt to explain --- the under-utilization of vocational rehabilitation, and independent living services by Hispanic Americans.**

# Important Issues When Providing VR Services

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- **Impersonal and intrusive services, (institutions) are bound to be rejected.**
- **When interpersonal context lacks sensitivity to  
  
core attitudes (e.g., trust, pride, etc.).**
- **Educate the family about possible supports and services available in care settings or in the home.**

# Cultural characteristics such as:

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- (orgullo), pride
- (respeto), respect
- (vergüenza), and shame

**Need to be taken into consideration or ...**

**> the rapport and communication will fail to be established.**

# Linguistic Competence

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***Capacity of service providers to communicate effectively with consumers, participants and their families.***

**It involves:**

- **Language literacy skills (native and local).**
- **Disability perceptions and expectations (Traditional vs. Western).**
- **Capacity to respond to the needs of the cultural complexity of a diverse population**

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# A Professional VR Counselor's Perspective.

# Serving Consumers from Diverse Cultural and Ethnic Backgrounds

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- **Counselor's perspective**
- **Outreach**
- **Improving delivery and outcomes**
- **Resources**

# Counselor's perspective

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- **What do I do? Who do I call?**
- **Language – communication**
- **Avoiding possible language barriers**

# Working with Language Interpreters

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## Qualifications

- **Preferably a Qualified Certified Interpreter.**
- **Bilingual, bicultural, who understand the language (jargon) of the institution.**
- **Is comfortable in the work setting, and understands significance of his/her work.**
- **Preserves and respects confidentiality.**

# Working with Interpreters

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## Multiple Roles:

- **Translator of Language:** facilitating the process of information sharing;
- **Culture Broker:** Interpreting the cross cultural event;
- **Client Advocate:** Conveys expectations, concerns and is not judgmental.

# VR counselor's responsibilities

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- **Legal aspects –what are my responsibilities?**
- **Understanding the group or groups**
- **Understanding the program/services**
- **Non-compliance and unsuccessful outcomes**

# OUTREACH

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- **Why outreach?**
- **Who is involved?**
- **When and where do you outreach?**
- **Remember that Groups are different**

# Improving Service Delivery and Outcomes

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- **Have a comprehensive Outreach Plan for consumers and staffing**
- **Establish strong and long lasting partnerships**
- **Reflect cultural values and norms on the Rehabilitation Process.**
- **Provide cultural diversity training to staff**
- **Outcome flexibility**

# Resources:

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- **VR Agencies in other states**
- **Agencies within your state (Dept. of Health, Social Services, Housing).**
- **Local/State Minority specific organizations**
- **Other Disability Advocacy Organizations (i.e., APRIL, NCIL, Agrability Programs CILs, Proyecto Vision, World Institute on Disabilities).**

# Resources

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- **The Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development.**
- **Center for Multicultural Human Services.**
- **Office of Minority Health Resource Center.**
- **RSA Projects for Working with Hispanics (Kentucky's farm workers project).**

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# ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATIONS

# Asian Americans

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According to the U.S. Census of 2000, Asian refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent -- and Asian groups are not limited to nationalities but include ethnic terms as well, such as Hmong and other groups.

# Asian Americans

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- The Census 2000 also indicated that among 10 million Asians in the U.S., five groups account for over one million and they are: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese.
- Together these five groups made up about 80% of the Asian population in the U.S..
- Americans of Asian descent who came to the United States brought with them many cultural traditions and customs that are still evident today.

# Coping with Culture-conflicts

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- In addition, recent studies indicated that: many of the Asian Americans born in this country have difficulties coping with culture-conflicts.
- The culture-conflicts are basically defined by their pride and self-esteem on how to acculturate into the American society.

# Coping...

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- The majority of the Asian cultures strongly advocate the virtue of sacrificing individual needs for the good of the group and since the family is the basic nuclear-unit in the society, parents have the highest authority in the family.
- The family as a unit places great emphasis on obedience, proper conduct, control of emotion, moral training, impulse control, and the acceptance of family and social obligations and overprotection for the their family members with disabilities.

# Cultural Characteristics

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- One who does not meet his or her share of family obligation can be subject to a significant amount of shame and guilt feelings.
- These cultural characteristics have direct impact on how the human services outreach efforts.
- Studies revealed that there is an under-utilization of vocational rehabilitation services among Asian Americans.

# Cultural Characteristics (cont.)

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- However, many recent studies indicated that Asian Americans are experiencing greater psychological discomfort than their European American counterparts.
  - This may be due to the fact that Asian Americans stress the importance of obedience and conformity to the family and the society.
  - Public admission of personal and psychological problems will bring shame to the individual and the family, and therefore is suppressed.

# General Perception

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- Attitudes towards persons with disabilities tend to be negative.
- Persons with disabilities are most likely to be perceived incapable of having a productive life.
- Family members tend to over-protect persons with disabilities. In particular, parents of persons with disabilities, mainly due to the fact that they feel ashamed or guilty about the condition of their children.

# Perception of VR Services

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- Many studies in cross-cultural counseling and rehabilitation counseling also found that traditional counseling approaches used by counselors in the U.S. do not work well with Asian American consumers.
- The termination rate among the Asian American consumers after the first interview is much higher than the European American consumers.

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# Summary and Considerations

# Working with Culturally Diverse Groups

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- Identify the cultural and linguistic background of the consumers and family.
- Learn about the culture, beliefs, and values of the consumers and his/her family and how these affect their attitudes toward disabilities.
- Understand the cultural implications on how individuals perceive and manage disabilities .

# Working with Culturally Diverse Groups (cont.)

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- Use culturally relevant and meaningful assessment and intervention tools – minimize biases.
- Seek thoughts and feelings of family members and involve them in clinical and service decision-making and intervention process.
- Create and distribute culturally appropriate materials to promote the rehabilitation services and available resources in the community.

# Working with Culturally Diverse Groups (cont.)

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- Use qualified interpreters and translators with appropriate training.
- Conduct ongoing advocacy and outreach through community/cultural center and faith-based organizations.

# Improving Intercultural Skills

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- Prepare your self to meet the service, educational and clinical challenges of working with culturally diverse clients (family/children).
- Learn about your own culture and about other cultures. Are there similarities?
- Be aware of your own biases – discomforts.
- Cultivate relationships with people who can serve as cultural informants.
- Participate in cultural events in your community and learn about rituals, celebrations, values and social-interactions.

# Improving....

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- **Demonstrate your interest to members of other cultures in your community.**
- **Be flexible in your inter-cultural interactions.**
- **Reserve judgment of about behaviors and intentions.**
- **As you become culturally competent -- others are adapting to your culture and becoming culturally competent as well.**
- **Cultural competence goes both ways.**

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***THANK YOU!***

# Presenters' Contacts

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