



Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Strategies for Supporting Youth and their Families

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Objectives

1. Define culture and diversity, as it relates to service provision to youth and their families.
2. Distinguish between Person-Centered and Person-Family Interdependent approaches to transition planning.
3. Identify best practices in serving individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

U.S. Department of Education

““Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD)” is an education term used by the U.S. Department of Education to define students enrolled in education programs who are either non-English proficient (NEP) or limited-English proficient (LEP). The term is also used to identify students from homes and communities where English is not the primary language of communication. These students speak a variety of languages and come from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds.”

(Gonzalez, Pagan, Wendell, & Love, 2011)

Webster Defines...

- **Diversity:** the inclusion of different types of people in a group or organization.
- **Culture:** the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.
- **Linguistic:** of or relating to language or linguistics.

What is your cultural identity?

- Caucasian, Asian, African American
- Mother, Father, Sister, Brother
- Employee, friend, advocate, person with a disability

What was your cultural identity?

What comes after High School?

- College
- Work
- Volunteer program
- Day habilitation program or sheltered workshop
- Staying at home

Transition Planning: IDEA

“Transition planning is intended to involve a youth with a disability and their family in identifying postsecondary goals along with adult services and supports to help achieve these goals.”

Person Centered

- Focus on youth outcomes
- Responsibility for transition services dependent on professionals
- Limited or no involvement of extended family
- Based on deficits model
- Assessments do not include a review of family cultural background
- Limited or no adaptations made on assessments
- Goals aligned with youth expectations-determined in IEP meeting

Success: Youth transition goals are met

Mainstream vs. CLD

- Upward mobility
- Self-determination
- Individualism
- Personal choice

(Achola & Greene, 2016)

Lack of Involvement of CLD Families

1. Power imbalance
2. Psychological or attitudinal barriers
3. Logistic barriers
4. Information barriers
5. Communication barriers
6. Socioeconomic status and contextual factors
7. Cultural influences

Person-Family Interdependent

- Takes into account the close relationship between the quality of life of a CLD family and the future adult life of their child with a disability
- Acknowledges the family, as a whole, is affected by the process and potential outcomes

Person-Family Interdependent

- Address both student and family outcomes
- Responsibility for transition services is shared between families, community members, and professionals
- Extended family involved
- Based on family strengths
- Assessment include a review of family cultural background
- Assessment adaptations reflect sociocultural and linguistic background of the family
- Transition goals aligned with youth and family expectations
- Goal setting process considers decision making structures in families

Person-Family Interdependent

Success:

- Youth transition goals are met
- Family needs are met
- Family is satisfied

Best Practices

- Encourage collaboration
- Build Relationships
- Inclusion

Encourage Collaboration

- Include persons from a variety of diverse backgrounds in any trainings or meetings.
- Assign staff from the same ethnic or linguistic group.
- Respect disagreements about goals.
- Understand the correlation between proposed transition activities and the family needs.

Build Relationships

- Meetings are more in depth: you are partnering with individuals who know the student best.
- Discuss family values, which may indicate potential areas of concern or conflict.
- Match family members with youth to provide family-to-family support.
- Provide non-judgmental considerations to family's expectations and beliefs about the individual and their future responsibilities.
- Empower the family to build on their own strengths.

Inclusion

- Offer materials in the families native language.
- Provide interpreters.
- Arrange meetings to ensure inclusion of key family members.
- Discuss the individuals current and future roles in supporting his or her family and the expected roles of the individual.

Impact of Best Practices

- Employment-lead to upward mobility in careers
- Higher Education-lays the foundation for obtaining supports
- Transition Process-not only impacts current individual, but provides an opportunity for future productive engagement of CLD families
- Expectations of individual by family and professional staff

Which Approach is Best?

- Neither is necessarily better
- Both provide a different method or ideas for working with individuals
- Combination of both?

Scenario #1

You are working with Nyung, a Vietnamese student, on her transition plan. Nyung lives with her mother and father and 25 year old cousin. Nyung's parents know a limited amount of English; however, Nyung's cousin is fluent in English. You note there are communication difficulties between you and Nyung's family regarding her transition plan and outcomes.

What do you do?

What issues may arise?

Scenario #2

You are assigned Juan's case, to ensure he is satisfied with his Medicaid Waiver program services and is receiving them as needed. You note during your meetings Juan does not seem to understand you or the information being presented to him. You decide to only communicate with his mother, Lupita, and do not include Juan in your discussions. You learn Juan is deaf and only communicates using ASL.

What do you do?

What issues may arise?

Take Away

- Every family is different: values, culture, etc.
- Don't use only your “ideas or assumptions”
 - Let them tell their story
 - Facilitate opportunities to learn more about their culture and values

Once you start to do this, you develop rapport and trust with the individuals you serve.

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