

MODULE 6

BEST PRACTICES FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE IN NON-PROFIT HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS: PARTNERSHIPS

SUMMARY OF MODULE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this module is to help participants understand the basic tasks that an organization should undertake **in relation to its partnerships in the community**, if it wants to serve diverse groups in the community in a manner that respects and accommodates the social and cultural characteristics and needs of those groups.

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Background: Defining Partnerships

- 6.1 Partnerships: Attitudes for Diversity-Competence
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SYNOPSIS OF CONTENT

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SYNOPSIS OF CONTENT

Best Practices for Diversity-Competence in Partnerships

The diversity-competent organization knows how to reach out to and collaborate with different kinds of individuals, groups and organizations in the community. Its collaboration with different groups and their organizations is directed by its policies on community partnerships and informed by its knowledge of these groups and culturally appropriate ways of working with them.

- An assessment of the current capacity of the organization to reach out to diverse groups in the community and to involve them in the work of the organization.
- An organizational policy on partnerships that clearly directs staff to reach out to different groups in the community and have them participate in the work of the organization (service planning, marketing of services, evaluation of services, etc.).
- A protocol for working with community groups and their organizations.
- Training of Board, staff and volunteers on how to work in partnership with different groups as peers, colleagues, experts, and resource persons.
- Involvement of different groups in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the organization's services.
- In-house information on services and other resources for different groups in the community.
- In-house information on organizations that specialize in serving particular groups.
- Internal organizational support for the work of staff with members of community groups (especially from staff supervisors).
- Formal appraisal of staff's performance in developing relationships with diverse groups in the community and working with those groups on particular issues and services.
- Sufficient money and other resources acquired to facilitate and sustain the organization's partnerships with diverse groups in the community.

Background: Defining Partnerships

☑ Partnerships, in the context of the work of non-profit human service agencies, usually refers to the external relationships of those organizations:

- relationships between the organization and other organizations (corporate partnerships)
- relationships between the organization and representatives of different groups in the community (community partnerships)

☑ The people associated with an organization's partnerships tend to be:

- the Board President (mainly for networking)
- the CEO or Executive Director (strategic approaches to partnerships)
- staff responsible for marketing and community outreach
- public relations staff/communications staff
- frontline staff directly involved in service delivery
- other staff who are members of inter-agency associations, networks, etc.
- other organizations that the organization works with to deliver services
- representatives and leaders of different groups in the agencies

☑ The activities usually associated with an organization's partnerships are:

- coordination of the organization's services with those of other organizations
- collaboration with other organizations on joint projects (research, training, etc.)
- collaboration with other organizations to plan and deliver services to specific groups in the community
- referring clients to other organizations with expertise in serving those clients
- receiving referrals from other organizations
- networking and consultation with other professional colleagues specializing in the delivery of services to particular groups in the community
- networking and consultation with representatives and leaders of different groups in the community (for service planning, service marketing, etc.)
- participation in social and cultural events of different groups in the community

6.1 PARTNERSHIPS: ATTITUDES FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

In the diversity-competent organization, all staff and volunteers have to have non-discriminatory attitudes towards diverse groups in the community. This principle is especially important for the organization's ability to develop strong partnerships with diverse groups in the community.

- Attitudes to be Developed and Nurtured for Diversity-Competence Among Staff and Volunteers (in relation to community partnerships)**
- Training for the Development of Positive Attitudes Towards Diverse Groups**
- Artifacts Reflecting and Celebrating Diversity**

☑ Attitudes to be Developed and Nurtured for Diversity-Competence Among Staff and Volunteers (in relation to community partnerships)

- Diversity among human beings is a natural phenomenon that should be accepted as a matter of fact and valued.
- Human services professionals should carry out their professional duties in a manner that is in accordance with Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada's Human Rights Legislation, Canada's Multiculturalism Act and other public laws and policies of Canada and its provinces.
- All human beings have the right to be treated equally and fairly.
- People should be valued and respected regardless of their biological, social, economic, and cultural characteristics.
- Differences among people of diverse backgrounds should be seen as assets and not as liabilities, as complementary and not as conflicting.
- It is morally wrong to place differential value on the characteristics of diverse groups. (For example, it is wrong to view racial groups in a hierarchical manner with one group being labelled as better or more valuable than another.)
- It is good to work with people from diverse groups and to learn from them.
- Co-workers from diverse racial, cultural, and social backgrounds should be treated respectfully and fairly.
- It is the obligation of the human services professional to provide services that are respectful of and responsive to the social and cultural characteristics and needs of diverse groups in the community.

There should be zero tolerance for attitudes of discrimination (racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.) within the organization.

Training for the Development of Positive Attitudes Towards Diverse Groups

Anti-oppression training should be provided to staff and volunteers to help them understand and address systemic discrimination in organizations and society as a whole.

- Racism
- Sexism
- Homophobia
- Discrimination against persons with disabilities
- Classism
- Ageism
- Ethnocentrism

Additional and more specific training should be provided to staff and volunteers:

- to understand their own attitudes towards people of diverse racial, social and cultural backgrounds.
- to value and respect the differences among themselves and to relate to each other in a manner that is respectful of the diversity among them.
- to develop positive attitudes about providing services to diverse groups.
- to develop positive attitudes about reaching out to different groups in the community to invite them to collaborate with the organization to improve the organization's services for those groups.
- to develop positive attitudes towards having the organization go through a change process to develop its capacity to provide appropriate and effective services to diverse groups in the community.

Artifacts Reflecting and Celebrating Diversity

The physical facilities - offices, meeting rooms, etc. - of the organization should overtly reflect and celebrate diversity and community partnerships:

- pictures of people from diverse groups
- motivational posters extolling the virtues of diversity and team work
- art and sculpture from different cultures, etc.

6.2 PARTNERSHIPS: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

Policies and procedures reflect the official will of the organization. When an organization has clear policies that instruct its staff to establish good working relationships and partnerships with different groups in the community, it then becomes incumbent upon staff to comply with those policies. These policies also direct senior management to find time and money for the organization to support these community partnerships.

- General Corporate Policy Statement on the Organization's Commitment to Establishing Partnerships with Diverse Groups in the Community**
- Specific Policies for Developing Diversity-Competence in Relation to the Organization's Partnerships**
- An Action Plan for Developing Diversity-Competence in Relation to the Partnerships of the Organization**
- A Financial Plan for Developing Diversity-Competence in Relation to the Partnerships of the Organization**
- A Communication Plan for Developing Diversity-Competence in Relation to the Partnerships of the Organization**

☑ General Corporate Policy Statement on the Organization's Commitment to Establishing Partnerships with Diverse Groups in the Community

- An organizational policy stating the organization's valuing of diversity in the community, its respect for that diversity, and its commitment to working with the diverse groups and their representatives in order to provide services that are socially and culturally appropriate for those groups.

☑ Specific Policies for Developing Diversity-Competence in Relation to the Organization's Partnerships

Examples:

- The organization should establish relationships with a wide range of groups in the community, with emphasis on those that are most at risk and in need of the services offered by the organization.
- The organization should collaborate with different groups in the community for at least the following purposes:
 - to recruit persons from diverse groups to become Board members
 - to recruit persons from diverse groups to become staff and volunteers of the organization
 - to provide training to staff and volunteers on how to best provide services to particular groups in the community
 - to plan, market, deliver and evaluate the services that the organization provides to diverse groups in the community
 - to assist the organization with conflict management in cases where the organization is experiencing difficulty or controversy in providing services to particular groups.
- The organization should provide staff and volunteers with training on how to develop effective partnerships with diverse groups in the community, including the leaders and organizations of those groups.

☑ An Action Plan for Developing Diversity-Competence in Relation to the Partnerships of the Organization

The Community Outreach Coordinator, or a designated manager, should develop a strategy and action plan for establishing good relationships and partnerships with diverse groups in the community. This plan should be specific on at least the following issues:

- the specific areas in which different groups should participate (for example, service planning, marketing of services, etc.);
- the approaches to be taken in reaching out to diverse groups in order to establish relationships and partnerships with them. (For example, liaising with a group via its community leaders or via its formal organizations or associations, establishing a working relationship with organizations that specialize in working with particular groups in the community, joint projects, etc.);
- (depending on the mandate and geographic catchment area served by the organization) particular groups and organizations in the community with which the organization should develop strong and on-going relationships and partnerships; and
- the types of training and other support that staff would need to have in order to develop good working relationships with diverse groups in the community.

☑ A Financial Plan for Developing Diversity-Competence in Relation to the Partnerships of the Organization

- In relation to the above action plan, the Outreach Coordinator or other manager should estimate the cost of establishing relationships and partnerships with diverse groups in the community.
- The financial department of the organization - if it has one - should be charged with the responsibility of finding the funds for the implementation of the action plan in the different areas of the organization. If there is no financial department or financial manager within the organization, then this funding responsibility may be turned over to the Executive Director or another senior manager.

☑ A Communications Plan for Developing Diversity-Competence in Relation to the Partnerships of the Organization

The organization should develop a plan for informing everyone in the organization about the organization's work to reach out to different groups in the community and involve them in the planning and delivery of services for those groups. At minimum, the communications plan should include:

- policies and procedures of the organization for establishing relationships with diverse groups in the community and working with them in different areas of the organization
- updates on work in progress
- updates on accomplishments
- updates on challenges
- request for on-going assistance from staff and volunteers
- contact information of persons responsible for the organization's project on diversity-competence

6.3 PARTNERSHIPS: KNOWLEDGE/INFORMATION FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

The organization needs to have accurate and reliable information on different groups in the community in order to effectively reach out to those groups and invite them to assist the organization in providing services to individuals and families from those groups. It also needs to have an idea about its own internal capacity to reach out to those groups and involve them in the work of the organization.

- Information on the Laws Governing the Provision of Services to People from Diverse Groups**
- Information on Diverse Groups in the Community**
- An Assessment of the Current Capacity of the Organization to Reach Out to Diverse Groups in the Community and to Involve Them in the Work of the Organization**

☑ Information on the Laws Governing the Provision of Services to People from Diverse Groups

- Legal information on the obligations and responsibilities of an organization for the provision of services to diverse groups in the community (Human rights legislation, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Employment Laws, etc.).
- A list of lawyers or legal firms with expertise on diversity and equity issues, with emphasis on those that are knowledgeable about the non-profit sector and human services.

☑ Information on Diverse Groups in the Community

Information on Diversity Within the General Population

- Size of different groups in relation to the general population
- Proportion of different groups in relation to the general population
- Growth rate of different groups in comparison to the growth rate of the general population
- Geographic distribution of different groups in the community

Information on Specific Groups in the Community/or Target Client Groups of the Organization

- Size of group
- Rate of growth
- Geographic distribution
- Socio-economic characteristics (education, occupation, income, home-ownership, etc.)
- Language(s) spoken
- Major cultural characteristics: history, customs, beliefs, religion, etc.
- Citizenship status (immigrants, refugees, Canadian citizens)
- Current challenges and needs
- Existing resources in the community for addressing challenges and needs of group
- Existing approaches for addressing challenges and needs of group
- Service delivery preferences of the group
- Social and cultural taboos with respect to service delivery and overall etiquette
- Organizations (cultural, social, religious, economic, political, etc.)
- Media
- Community leaders
- Experts on the group

☑ An Assessment of the Current Capacity of the Organization to Reach Out to Diverse Groups in the Community and to Involve Them in the Work of the Organization

Factual Information on the Partnerships of the Organization

- Outreach to diverse groups in the community: How is this done by the organization?
- The different community groups that participate in the work of the organization
- The different ways in which the organization works with diverse groups in the community
- Challenges encountered by the organization in reaching out to different groups in the community (specific groups and related challenges)
- Challenges encountered by the organization in working with different community groups inside the organization (specific groups and related challenges)

Attitudinal Information (to be collected from staff and volunteers)

- attitudes towards persons of diverse backgrounds
- perception of one's knowledge of diversity issues
- perception of one's skills in working with people from different racial, cultural and other social groups
- attitudes towards team work
- attitudes towards working in partnership with different groups in the community
- attitudes towards change
- attitudes towards risk-taking
- feelings about the organization's capacity to consult with different groups in the community and involve them in the work of the organization
- feelings about the organization's support to staff for reaching out to different groups in the community and involving them in the work of the organization

Existing community partners should also be invited to share their feelings about their experience in working with the organization (positive or negative experience, challenges encountered, etc.)

(Assessment tools should be developed to collect the above types of information.)

6.4 PARTNERSHIPS: SKILLS FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

The skills required for working with different groups in the community are a combination of the conventional skills required for collaboration and teamwork plus specific skills in cross-cultural communications and in working with community groups on service issues.

- Generic skills in the areas of collaboration, teamwork, etc.
- Cross-cultural communications skills
- Cross-cultural conflict resolution skills
- Community outreach skills
- How to consult with different groups in the community
- How to work on projects with different groups in the community
- How to involve different community groups in the planning of the organization's services
- How to involve different community groups in the delivery of the organization's services
- How to establish effective boundaries in the organization's relationships with different groups in the community
- How to evaluate the community partnerships of the organization
- How to assess and supervise the performance of staff in working with different community groups inside and outside the organization

6.5 PARTNERSHIPS: PERFORMANCE FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

The diversity-competent organization knows how to reach out to and collaborate with different kinds of individuals, groups and organizations in the community. Its collaboration with different groups and their organizations is directed by its policies on community partnerships and informed by its knowledge of these groups and culturally appropriate ways of working with them.

Indicators of Successful Performance:

- An organizational policy on partnerships that clearly directs staff to reach out to different groups in the community and have them participate in the work of the organization (service planning, marketing of services, evaluation of services, etc.)
- A formal protocol for working with community groups and their organizations
- Training of Board, staff and volunteers on how to work in partnership with different groups as peers, colleagues, experts, resource persons, etc.
- Involvement of different groups in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the organization's services
- In-house information on services and other resources for different groups in the community
- In-house information on organizations that specialize in serving particular groups
- Internal organizational support for the work of staff with members of community groups
- Formal appraisal of staff's performance in developing relationships with diverse groups in the community and working with those groups on particular issues and services
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the organization's partnerships
- Sufficient money and other resources acquired to facilitate and sustain the organization's partnerships with diverse groups in the community

6.6 PARTNERSHIPS: EVALUATION FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

- A conceptual framework for evaluating the work done by the organization to work in partnership with different groups in the community. (Use the information provided in this module, especially that on “Indicators of Successful Performance.”)
- A procedure(s) for conducting the evaluation.
- Tools for evaluation and measurement (survey questionnaires, inventories, etc.)
- Undertaking of the evaluation
- Communication of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation
- A procedure for implementing the recommendations of the evaluation
- Implementation of the recommendations of the evaluation

6.7 PARTNERSHIPS: RESOURCES FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

- Senior Management Support
- Internal Champions
- External Champions/Resource Persons
- Professional Labour and Services
- Time
- Money

☑ Senior Management Support

- Consensus between the Board and senior management that the organization should develop its capacity to reach out and consult with different groups in the community in order to provide appropriate and effective services for those groups.
- Consensus between the Board and senior management that they should work together to develop the capacity of the organization to work in partnership with diverse groups in the community and to provide visible leadership on this task for the rest of the organization to see and emulate.
- Commitment of senior management staff to be supportive of each other and frontline staff in the process of developing the organization's capacity to establish working partnerships with different groups in the community.

☑ Internal Champions

- The Outreach Coordinator (or a similar type of manager) should lead the organization's project on developing partnerships with different groups in the community.
- A small advisory group on development of community partnerships for the organization.
- The Diversity Manager of the organization (working closely with the above group)

☑ External Champions/Resource Persons

- Professional networks or associations that focus on diversity and equity issues, with emphasis on those in the non-profit sector.
- Human service professionals in other organizations who are knowledgeable about diversity and equity issues.
- Human service professionals working on specific projects related to diversity and equity in employment and training.

Board members, senior managers, the Community Outreach Coordinator, and the Diversity Manager should network and collaborate with the above parties as much as possible. These external professionals are a source of knowledge and can provide professional and emotional support for the work of the organization on diversity issues.

Professional Labour and Services

- Project supervisor/leader (Outreach Coordinator or other manager)
- Staff/consultants for development of policies and procedures
- Trainer(s)
- Clerical support for staff and consultants involved
- Legal services, if necessary
- Insurance services, if necessary

Time

- To recruit staff or consultants to assist the Outreach Coordinator (if necessary)
- To establish and develop the internal advisory group on diversity-competence for community partnerships
- To provide training to Board members, staff and volunteers on how to work in partnership with different groups in the community.
- To develop and implement the policies and procedures for developing diversity-competence in the work of the organization with community partners.
- To acquire the necessary information, do the required assessments, surveys, etc.
- To participate in inter-agency networks and professional associations that address issues of diversity and equity at the human resources management level of organizations.
- To make mistakes and learn from them.

Money

- To hire an Outreach Coordinator (Manager of Community Relations, etc.)
- To purchase professional labour and services as required.
- To purchase training curricula, materials and other resources of relevance to diversity-competence and partnerships.
- To rent training facilities if necessary.
- To participate in professional networks/associations focused on diversity and equity issues.
- To purchase artifacts promoting diversity and equity (pictures, posters, sculptures, etc) throughout the physical spaces of the organization.
- To purchase legal services, if necessary.
- To purchase additional insurance, if necessary.

Questions for Review and Discussion

- How relevant is the information presented in this module for:
 - You/your position in your organization?
 - Your organization?

- Is there anything in the module that you disagree with? Why?

- What issues were not made clear/need further clarification?

- What else should have been included in the information presented?

- What insights do you have after studying this module?

- How do you think you can apply the information presented in this module to your organization or agency?