

<p style="text-align: center;">MODULE 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DEFINING DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE</p>
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SUMMARY OF MODULE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this module is to help participants understand the meaning of diversity-competence as a social value and an organizational practice.

CONTENT

Background

- 2.1 The Concept of Diversity
- 2.2 The Concept of Competence
- 2.3 A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Diversity-Competence in Organizations
- 2.4 The Relationship Among Diversity-Competence, Cultural Competence, and Linguistic Competence
- 2.5 The Diversity-Competent Organization in Relation to Other Types of Competent Organizations

Questions for Review and Discussion

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENT

(See next page.)

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENT

- Diversity is a fact of life and a requirement for life. As such, it should be valued.
- Within a society that espouses values of equal opportunity and democracy, diversity-competence is a social value which directs the society to respect differences among people, include people of diverse groups in all areas of society, and provide services and opportunities to people in a manner that respects and accommodates their particular social and cultural characteristics.
- Applied to organizations, diversity-competence refers to the characteristics and activities of an organization, which enable it to address the needs of different groups of people in accordance with the values, customs, beliefs and languages of those groups. Diversity-competence has at least seven components:
 - attitudes & values
 - policies & procedures
 - knowledge/information
 - skills
 - performance
 - evaluation
 - resources

These components of diversity-competence can be applied to the four major parts of organizations: governance, human resources management, service delivery and partnerships.

- Diversity-competence refers not only to an organization's capacity to serve diverse groups in socially and culturally appropriate ways. It also refers to the organization's capacity to manage and support diversity within itself (policies and procedures supportive of diversity, diverse staff and volunteers, physical facilities and artifacts that are supportive and reflective of diversity in the community, etc.)
- Diversity-competence includes, but is not limited to, the popular notions of cultural and linguistic competence that are associated mostly with service provision to ethnic and linguistic minorities.

Background:

Action without the benefit of prior reflection is often flawed. Time should be taken to reflect on what the organization understands diversity-competence to mean, and how it wants to go about developing that competence. Such reflection, done in a collaborative team setting, can help the organization to have a clear vision of what it wants to achieve and a path for making that vision a reality.

This module offers a definition of diversity-competence and shows how the latter differs from related concepts such as cultural competence and linguistic competence. It also shows how the diversity-competent organization has evolved from other types of competent organizations (monoculturally competent organizations and legally-competent or non-discriminatory organizations). Altogether, the information in this module represents a conceptual framework for understanding what diversity-competence is, what it does, what it looks like (or consists of) and what it needs to be sustained over time.

What this module does not do is apply the ideas about diversity-competence to specific areas of non-profit, human service organizations (such as governance, human resources management, service delivery, partnerships, etc.) That kind of specific and focused application is done in the next four modules, with each module focusing on a particular area of non-profit, human service organizations.

The information presented in this module represents a particular perspective on diversity-competence within organizations. The reader is encouraged to seek out other perspectives and approaches. Some of the resources listed in the bibliography may be useful for this task.

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF DIVERSITY

- Dictionary Definition of Diversity**
- Diversity in the Emergence of the Known Universe**
- Diversity in the Biosphere**
- Diversity Among Human Beings**
- The Value of Cultural Diversity**

☑ **Dictionary Definition of Diversity** (Encarta Encyclopaedia)

Variety, social inclusiveness, difference or discrepancy (from what is normal or expected)

☑ **Diversity in the Emergence of the Known Universe** (Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, The Universe Story, 1992)

At the macro level of the universe, things come into being through a three-stage process referred to as the Principle of Cosmogenesis. Diversity is present in each of the three stages of cosmogenesis:

- Differentiation: separation from original source, emergence of difference
- Autopoiesis: self-organization, complexity and diversity within
- Communion: relationships among distinct and complex entities in mutually supporting ways.

☑ **Diversity in the Biosphere** (Niles Elderdige, “Biodiversity,” 2003)

Biodiversity

- Biodiversity or biological diversity is the sum of all the different species of animals, plants, fungi, and microbial organisms living on Earth and the variety of habitats in which they live.
- Scientists estimate that upwards of 10 million - and some suggest more than 100 million - different species inhabit the Earth.
- Each species is adapted to its unique niche in the environment, from the peaks of mountains to the depths of deep-sea hydrothermal vents, and from polar ice caps to tropical rain forests.

Ecological Diversity

- Ecological diversity is the intricate network of different species present in local ecosystems and the dynamic interplay between them. An ecosystem consists of organisms from many different species living together in a region that are connected by the flow of energy, nutrients and matter that occurs as the organisms of different species interact with one another.
- Removing just one species from an ecosystem damages the flow of energy of that system.
- The Convention on Biological Diversity, declared in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 and ratified by more than 160 countries, obligates governments to take action to protect plant and animal species.

☑ **Diversity Among Human Beings**

- When applied to communities and societies, the concept of diversity refers to the range of differences within and among population groups.
- The differences observed in the population can be organized into two sets of diverse characteristics: natural characteristics and acquired characteristics.
- **Natural characteristics** are those characteristics of the individual that are biological and which he or she cannot control or change to any significant extent.
- The major natural characteristics of a person are: genetic make-up, race, gender, age, place of birth, and physical and intellectual disabilities at birth or later in the life cycle.
- **Acquired characteristics** refer to those aspects of the individual that were acquired by the individual voluntarily or involuntarily and which can be changed or removed through personal or social intervention.
- The major acquired characteristics of a person are: cultural group membership, language, religion, social class, educational achievement, occupation, income, marital status, and citizenship status within a country.
- Discrimination against individuals and groups is based mostly on negative perceptions of the natural characteristics of those individuals and groups and their characteristic of cultural group membership.
- Over the past two decades in Canada, the term diversity has been used to refer primarily to immigrants, visible minorities, and people of non-European backgrounds. During that period, however, the popular discussion about diversity in relation to discrimination expanded the notion of diversity to include other characteristics already emphasized by social movements linked to the Civil Rights Movement. Issues of gender, social class, sexual orientation, and lifestyle choices can today be found in public discussions about diversity.

☑ The Value of Cultural Diversity

- Cultural diversity refers to different systems of values, beliefs, customs and languages used by different groups of human beings to be in the world and to relate to the world and each other.
- Culture, as a system of values, beliefs, and customs can thus be seen as an approach to problem-solving and creativity.
- Cultural diversity, therefore, represents different human approaches to problem-solving and creativity. Put another way, the existence of different cultures and cultural groups means that human beings – as a species - have more than one way to survive and develop in the world.
- In a catastrophic crisis on the planet, some groups may survive, while some groups may perish. In the final analysis, however, some form of human life would have been preserved.
- There are hundreds of ethno-cultural groups in the world.
- There are hundreds of different languages spoken in the world.
- In November 2001, 185 member states of UNESCO adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, in which they described cultural diversity as ‘the common heritage of humanity’ which must be valued and protected.
- <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127161e.pdf#page=9>

Diversity is not something to be taken frivolously. It is a characteristic of life on Earth and is important for the maintenance and evolution of life on Earth. As such, it is important for living beings to be supportive of diversity; this requires the ability or competence to value and nurture diversity in the interest of the common goal: life.

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF COMPETENCE

- Competence refers to the ability to do something. Although competence can be high or low, in everyday language the term “competence” is used in a positive and complimentary manner. One is either competent or incompetent in relation to doing something.
- In relation to individuals, competence usually refers to one’s knowledge, skills and attitudes. It can also include experience in doing the task in question. The assumption is that the more experience a person has in doing a particular task, the more likely he or she will be competent in doing that task.
- In relation to organizations, competence usually refers to the characteristics of the organization that enable it to do its work: employees, policies, procedures, money, strategic relationships, etc. Sometimes the age of the organization – the number of years it has been around and providing its services – is taken into consideration when describing the competence of an organization.

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- From this perspective, diversity-competence means the ability to produce and preserve diversity. This implies that diversity-competence also means responding to diversity in ways that are appropriate for preservation of diversity.
- It also means having knowledge about diversity. It means having skills to create diversity and to respond to diversity in a way that preserves and enhances diversity. It means having procedures that one can use to create, preserve and enhance diversity.
- Applied to human service organizations, diversity-competence means that the organizations have the capacity to make themselves diverse in terms of who they are (workforce), what they do (services) and whom they serve (clients).

2.3 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE IN ORGANIZATIONS

- What Diversity-Competence Is** (Essence)
- What Diversity-Competence Does** (Function)
- What Diversity-Competence Looks Like** (Form)
- What Diversity-Competence Requires** (Sustenance)

☑ What Diversity-Competence Is (Essence)

Diversity-competence is a social value and a social and organizational practice in relation to the phenomenon of diversity in the world.

Social Value

As a social value, diversity-competence is expressed through the behaviour (or practice) of individuals, groups and organizations in society. The following are valued by the diversity-competent individual or organization:

- differences among individuals and groups in society as a matter of fact.
- the maintenance and nurturing of social and cultural diversity in society.
- knowledge, skills and activities aimed at managing diversity among groups in society.
- the provision of equal opportunity for all groups in society regardless of the characteristics of those groups.*
- the provision of goods and services to people of diverse backgrounds in a manner that respects and accommodates the distinct physical, social and cultural characteristics of those persons.*

Social and Organizational Practice

As a social and organizational practice, diversity-competence is the behaviour of individuals, groups and organizations that is purposely designed to produce:

- treatment of people in a manner that is respectful of their physical, social and cultural characteristics;
- establishment of laws, policies and procedures to ensure that cultural, linguistic and other social differences among people are acknowledged, respected and preserved;
- provision of services to people in a manner that is respectful and inclusive of their particular physical, social and cultural characteristics; and
- monitoring and enforcing of those laws, policies, procedures and services designed to support diverse groups.

** There is nothing in the term “diversity-competence” that overtly indicates that all groups are to be valued and treated equally or that their social and cultural characteristics should be respected and accommodated. However, when associated with democratic societies which espouse the values of equality and freedom of expression, the concept of diversity-competence can be related to the value of equality for all citizens and the other social values associated with that of equality. This association with social justice values, notwithstanding, the term “diversity-competence” does not have the same emotional punch as the terms anti-racism, anti-oppression, terms which emphasize the need to correct social injustices.*

☑ What Diversity-Competence Does (Function)

For Individuals and Organizations

- Diversity-competence enables a person or organization to understand and respect people of different social and cultural backgrounds.
- Diversity-competence enables a person or an organization to provide services to diverse groups in a community in a manner that respects and accommodates the physical, social and cultural characteristics of persons in those diverse groups.

For Diverse Groups

- Diversity-competence enables individuals and groups to maintain their unique physical, social and cultural characteristics while participating in all areas of social life.
- Diversity-competence ensures that the goods, services and opportunities provided to people of different social and cultural backgrounds are relevant and effective for those people.

For Government

- Diversity-competence enables a democratic government to incorporate different groups in society in a manner that promotes equal opportunity, social stability and social cohesion.

For Society as a Whole

- Diversity-competence enables a society to ensure the existence of more than one approach to problem-solving and creativity in society (a plurality of social and cultural approaches).

☑ What Diversity-Competence Looks Like (Form)

As an organizational practice, diversity-competence can be regarded as having seven (7) distinct components:

- Attitudes and Values (*Emotions*)
- Policies and Procedures (*The will to proceed and the paths to follow*)
- Knowledge/Information (*Intellectual development*)
- Skills (*Technical development*)
- Performance (*Walking the talk*)
- Evaluation (*Reflection and adjustment*)
- Resources (*Positive energy, includes financial capital*)

(See the following pages for a description of each of these dimensions or components of diversity-competence.)

At the performance or practice level, these components of diversity-competence are applied to the basic working areas of human service organizations:

- Governance (Board members, Executive Director or CEO)
- Human Resources Management (Staff and volunteers)
- Service Delivery (Services and clients)
- Partnerships (Relationships in the external environment of the organization)

See next page for an illustration of the interconnection of diversity-competence and the above four (4) components of non-profit, human service agencies.

**A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING
DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE WITHIN AN ORGANIZATION**

Dimensions of Human Service Organizations	Dimensions of Diversity-Competence						
	Attitudes & Values	Policies & Procedures	Knowledge/ Information	Skills	Performance	Evaluation	Resources
Governance: Board & Senior Managers							
Human Resources Management: Staff & Volunteers							
Service Delivery: Services & Clients							
Partnerships: Stakeholder Relationships							

- **Attitudes Towards Diverse Groups in the Community (*Emotions*)**

Diversity-competence is an attitude. It is a particular attitude or approach towards diversity.

- Diversity-competence is an attitude of accepting –as a matter of fact - that there is diversity among people.
- Diversity-competence is an attitude of seeing people and groups as social equals.
- Diversity-competence is an attitude of not ranking or placing differential value on the characteristics of diverse groups. (For example, not seeing groups in a hierarchical manner with one group being labelled as better or more valuable than another.)
- Diversity-competence is an attitude of valuing and respecting people regardless of their characteristics and the differences among those characteristics.
- Diversity-competence is an attitude of valuing the differences among people, seeing those differences as assets and not as liabilities; seeing those differences as complementary and not as conflicting.
- Diversity-competence is an attitude of willingness to work with people from diverse groups and to learn from them.

Applied to organizations, diversity-competence – as attitude - is a corporate atmosphere or corporate culture in which diversity is encouraged and celebrated (diversity of ideas, diversity of staff, diversity of clients, diversity of methods and approaches, diversity of systems, structures, etc.). For example, the pictures and posters on the walls of the organization's offices portray people of different social, racial and cultural backgrounds; the welcome sign at the entrance of the organization is written in different languages; different religious holidays are acknowledged and celebrated within the organization; zero tolerance exists for derogatory "jokes" about any group.

Applied to the counsellor/client relationship, diversity-competence requires the counsellor to be aware of her own attitudes and beliefs about different groups of people and the extent to which these help or hinder her in her role as a service provider. It also requires the counsellor to be aware of the attitude of the client towards people of different social and ethnic backgrounds. For example, a client who has been physically abused by her partner subtly hints that she does not respect people of a particular racial group and would prefer that the counsellor handling her case not be a member of that racial group. The counsellor should be aware of this attitude of the client and know how to deal with it appropriately.

- **Policies and Procedures** (*The will to proceed and the paths to follow*)

Diversity-competence, when applied to organizations, institutions and societies as a whole, consists of more than just positive attitudes towards diverse groups in society. It also consists of policies and procedures, as well as organizational structures, partnerships and practices that explicitly promote the value of diversity and ensure that all diverse groups within and outside the organization are treated fairly and appropriately in relation to their particular characteristics, needs and circumstances.

Applied to organizations, diversity-competence includes the encoding of the values of diversity and equity into the formal statements, policies, regulations, and guidelines of an organization. The organization specifies via its policies and procedures how it will value diversity and how it will respond to the needs of diverse groups. These formal organizational policies and procedures prescribe the practices of the organization and its staff in relation to people of diverse backgrounds and specify the rewards and penalties associated with compliance and non-compliance, respectively.

Diversity-competence is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes to be used in appropriate cultural settings to improve the quality of services, thereby producing better outcomes (adapted from Davis, 1997).

The organization's policies on governance, human resources, services, etc. should address diversity and equity issues.

Examples of policies reflecting the value of diversity-competence include: Canada's Multiculturalism Act, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada's human rights legislation, anti-racism policies of organizations, anti-sexism policies, policies dictating that the physical facilities of the organization should be accessible to people with disabilities, and so on.

Examples of procedures and practices reflecting the value of diversity-competence include placing job advertisements in both mainstream media and ethno-specific media, having a protocol for working with language interpreters, recruiting staff who are knowledgeable of different groups, providing new staff with an orientation to the organization's policies on diversity issues, referring clients to agencies that are knowledgeable and skilled in serving people of particular social and cultural groups.

Applied to the counsellor/client relationship, diversity-competence means that the counsellor should adhere to the policies and procedures specified by the organization for the provision of services to individual clients. This means that the counsellor should be trained in how to follow the policies and procedures. It also means that incentives should be used to ensure that the policies and procedures are followed.

- **Knowledge of Diverse Groups and How to Serve Them (*Intellectual Development*)**

Diversity-competence includes knowledge of the facts about diverse groups in the community and the social laws governing the treatment of people in society. It also includes the organization's knowledge of its own internal capacity to serve diverse groups.

- Knowledge of different social and cultural groups in a community: their history, their cultures, the languages they speak, their present circumstances, their needs, their interests, their preferences for services and methods of service delivery
- Knowledge of the degree of organization within different social and ethnic groups, the social and cultural organizations of those groups, the sources of leadership, influence, etc.
- Knowledge of the public communications media of diverse groups (radio, television, newspapers, websites, etc.)
- Knowledge of laws and public policies on issues of discrimination, human rights, equality, etc.
- Knowledge of the capacity of the organization to provide services to diverse groups (an assessment of the workforce, policies, procedures, services, etc.)

Applied to organizations, diversity-competence means that the organization has within itself knowledge of different groups in society and access to other organizations, groups and individuals with knowledge of different groups. For example, the organization would have staff that are knowledgeable about the values, beliefs and customs of different groups. However, since the organization cannot know everything about every group in society, it would also have partnerships with other organizations that are knowledgeable about particular groups in the community.

Applied to the counsellor/client relationship, diversity-competence requires that the diversity and complexity within the client be acknowledged, understood and respected. For example, a person can be male, South Asian, with Punjabi as his first language, university-educated as an engineer, employed as a taxi driver, and married with two children. A diversity-competent social worker would see more than just the skin colour and accent of this client. She would see a whole person with a variety of social and cultural characteristics experiencing a particular problem. She would take these social and cultural characteristics into consideration when providing services to this person. Above all, she would not stereotype this individual in relation to the general characteristics of the ethnic group to which he belongs.

- **Skills for Providing Services to Diverse Groups (*Technical Development*)**

Diversity-competence includes the technical and clinical skills to intervene in the lives of people from diverse groups in a manner that respects and responds to the characteristics, customs, values and beliefs of those groups. Diversity-competence – as a set of skills - means knowing how to do the following kinds of tasks effectively:

- design and plan programs to address the needs of diverse groups in the community
- market services to diverse groups in ways that are appropriate for those groups
- network with professionals and community leaders of diverse communities.
- provide services to a person in a language that she understands and prefers
- provide services to a person in a manner that is respectful of and responsive to his or her particular physical, social and cultural characteristics
- evaluate programs and services in terms of how well those programs and services address issues of diversity and in terms of how well those programs and services are used by people from diverse groups
- recruit and retain staff from different social and cultural backgrounds
- manage conflicts between people of different social and cultural backgrounds
- acquire funding to support diversity-competence work.

Applied to organizations, diversity-competence means that organizations should hire people with the above skills and train existing employees to develop those skills. It also means that managers need to know how to supervise employees to use these skills in the workplace, and how to link compensation to development and application of those skills.

Applied to the counsellor/client relationship, diversity-competence means the counsellor should:

- have the language skills necessary to communicate with the client
- be able to work with language and cultural interpreters
- be able to use counselling approaches and techniques that are socially and culturally appropriate for the client
- be able to see situations from different social and cultural perspectives in an impartial manner
- be aware of her own limitations with respect to serving diverse groups
- be able to refer clients to other service providers who have special expertise in meeting the needs of particular groups.

- **Performance: (*Walking the Talk*)**

Diversity-competence remains invisible and inaccessible if all it consists of are attitudes and information about diversity in the heads of people and written policies and procedures in official manuals about how to provide services to different groups in the community. At the performance or action level, diversity-competence is the application or implementation of attitudes, knowledge, skills, policies and procedures about providing services to diverse groups of people.

Applied to organizations, the practice of diversity-competence takes place in different areas of the organizations. Moreover, each organization practises diversity-competence within itself and outside of itself.

Inside the Organization

- Governance (Board of Directors and senior managers)
- Human Resources Management (staff)

Outside the Organization

- Service Delivery (clients and services)
- Partnerships (other organizations, community groups, etc.)

(The next four modules provide a detailed discussion of “best practices” in the above four areas.)

- **Performance of Diversity-Competence Inside the Organization**

Internally, the diversity-competent organization strives to have a diverse Board, staff, and volunteers from different social, racial and cultural backgrounds. More importantly, it strives to treat Board members, staff and volunteers from diverse backgrounds in an equal and fair manner, while valuing and respecting the differences among them. Furthermore, it invests in training them in how to serve people of diverse social and cultural backgrounds.

- **Performance of Diversity-Competence Outside the Organization**

The second area for the application of diversity-competence relates to the interface between the organization and its external environment: the services provided by the organization to members of the community and the kinds of relationships or partnerships it establishes with others in the community at large.

The organization has to be able to relate to clients from diverse social and cultural backgrounds and to ensure that the services provided to them are appropriate and effective for them.

In addition, the organization has to be aware of resources in its external environment that it can access to better serve its clients of diverse social and cultural backgrounds. This includes, among other things, establishing partnerships with organizations that have special expertise in serving particular social or cultural groups.

Relatedly, it means being able to manage its relationships with organizations whose mandates and expertise are different from its own.

Applied to the counsellor/client relationship, the performance of diversity-competence looks like the following:

- The counsellor works with colleagues of diverse social, racial and cultural backgrounds within the organization in a respectful and supportive manner.
- The counsellor provides services to clients of diverse social, racial and cultural backgrounds in ways that are socially and culturally appropriate for the clients.
- The counsellor networks and collaborates with other counsellors, community leaders, etc. outside of the organization who have expertise in serving diverse groups.

At minimum, the application of diversity-competence should result in:

- treatment of people in a manner that is respectful of their physical, social and cultural characteristics;
- establishment of policies and procedures to ensure that cultural, linguistic and other social differences among people are acknowledged and respected;
- provision of services to people in a manner that is respectful and inclusive of people's particular physical, social and cultural characteristics;
- monitoring and enforcing of those policies, procedures and services designed to support diverse groups; and
- acquisition of resources to support diversity-competence.

- **Evaluation**

The diversity-competent organization continually reflects on its capacity to provide services to diverse groups in the community and makes the necessary adjustments

Applied to organizations, human service organizations that want to become diversity-competent should undertake the following kinds of assessments in their organizations:

- ◆ An assessment of all staff and volunteers with respect to their attitudes towards persons from diverse groups in the community
- ◆ An assessment of the policies and procedures of the organization to see to what extent they are inclusive of diversity and the extent to which they direct the organization:
 - to have a diverse Board of Directors
 - to have a diverse workforce
 - to provide services to diverse groups in socially and culturally appropriate ways
 - to establish good working partnerships with diverse groups in the community
 - to secure financial and other kinds of support to develop and maintain the diversity-competence of the organization.
- ◆ An assessment of the staff and volunteers of the organization to see:
 - the extent of racial, cultural and other types of diversity among them
 - their knowledge of diverse groups in the community
 - their skills for providing services to diverse groups
- ◆ An assessment of the services that the organization provides to diverse groups in the community
- ◆ An assessment of the relationships that the organization has with diverse groups in the external environment of the organization.

Applied to the counsellor/client relationship, the organization should include the counsellor's ability to provide appropriate services to clients of diverse backgrounds in its supervision and evaluation of the counsellor.

☑ Resources (*Positive Energy, includes financial capital*)

(See next section)

☑ What Diversity-Competence Requires (*Sustenance*)

Developing the diversity-competent organization is an intensive organizational change process that takes several years to complete. Furthermore, the organization never stops developing its diversity-competence because the community around it is constantly changing, laws change; trained staff leave the organization (and so on).

There are at least seven (7) types of resources and support that the organization needs to embark on a journey towards diversity-competence:

- Senior Management Support
- Support of Staff and Volunteers
- Champions
- Professional Labour and Services
- Time
- Money
- Public Support

- **Senior Management Support**

- The Board of Directors should be in support of the organization's development of diversity-competence.
- The Executive Director and other senior managers should also be in support of this.

- **Support of Staff and Volunteers**

Front-line staff and volunteers who work directly with clients from diverse groups in the community need to be supportive of the organization's decision to formally and systematically develop its competence for providing services to diverse groups. These staff and volunteers are the "faces" and "voices" of the organization in the outside world. Those faces and voices should reflect a healthy respect for diversity. Specific training for staff and volunteers on diversity-competence and what it means for them should be provided.

- **Champions**

Diversity-competence, as a social value and organizational practice, requires the support of people who are willing to become champions for maintaining and supporting diversity in Canada and in the organizations where they work. These persons have to be recruited, trained and supported. They can be found among people who are:

- passionate about the diversity among humans and among all life on Earth
- committed to values of equality, social justice, fairness, freedom
- kind and compassionate
- experienced in working with disadvantaged and socially marginalized groups
- knowledgeable about the pain that comes from being victims of discrimination
- knowledgeable about the joys involved in helping to end discrimination among human beings
- willing to take risks in their personal lives and in their professional lives
- knowledgeable about human services and the management of human service organizations
- effective communicators

Champions for diversity and diversity-competence can be sought from within human service organizations and outside of those organizations. "Inside" champions should be sought from all levels of the organization, with emphasis on senior management being exemplary role models. The literature on best practices for diversity-competence advises that an organization establish an internal working group or advisory committee to be responsible for the development of diversity-competence inside the organization. "Outside" champions could be prominent educators, respected philanthropists, local politicians, media executives, local newspapers, etc.

- **Professional Labour and Services**

- Diversity Manager or Diversity Team
- Staff or consultants to develop policies and procedures
- Trainers

- **Time**

Becoming diversity-competent is not an overnight accomplishment. It is a process that will take several years. Furthermore, there is no natural “end” to the process of becoming diversity-competent, since people and circumstances are constantly changing both locally and globally. The organization also has to constantly adapt to changes in the population and to turnover in Board and staff that were originally trained by the organization.

Examples of tasks that will require a lot of time to do:

- introducing the concept of diversity-competence to the organization
- planning the change process
- finding resources
- doing the necessary work (research, training, development of policies and procedures, etc.)
- evaluating the work done
- making mistakes and learning from them

- **Money**

Diversity-competence is something to be acquired and practised in addition to the regular and on-going work of the organization. Hence, additional funds are needed to help the organization develop its capacity to provide services to diverse groups in the community.

Examples of tasks for which funding is required:

- Leadership and coordination of the change process for diversity-competence
- Research on the current capacity of the organization to serve diverse groups
- Research on the characteristics and needs of diverse groups in the community
- Training (anti-oppression, alternative counselling methods, etc.)
- Development of policies and procedures
- Advertisement of Board and staff vacancies in non-mainstream media (ethnic newspapers, communications media for the elderly, for gays and lesbians, etc.)
- Hiring of interpreters
- Translation of documents into different languages

- **Public Support**

If diversity-competence is to become a core feature of human service organizations, then it has to be supported not only inside the organization but outside the organization as well. This is especially the case when public taxpayers' money is being requested to develop the diversity-competence of human service organizations.

What this means is that human service organizations have to promote the value of diversity and the practice of diversity-competence to ordinary Canadians as well as to the Canadian business sector and the Canadian government sector. Human service organizations should seek out opportunities to communicate the value of diversity and the importance of organizations being able to provide services to people of diverse backgrounds.

Advocating for social policies that are supportive of diversity within the population and services for people of diverse social and cultural backgrounds should also be on the agenda for champions of diversity and diversity-competence.

2.4 THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE, CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

The difference between diversity-competence and cultural competence and linguistic competence is not a difference of kind but a difference of degree.

- The conventional, everyday understanding of culture associates culture primarily with issues of race, ethnicity, religion, and even language. Hence, the term cultural competence is often associated with the ability of an organization to provide services to different ethnic and cultural groups in a community. Within this perspective, cultural competence ranges from monocultural competence to multicultural competence (being able to serve one particular ethnic group versus being able to serve different cultural groups).
- Similarly, linguistic competence is associated with the ability to communicate with people who speak different languages. Within this perspective, linguistic competence ranges from unilingual competence to multi-lingual competence. An organization can have staff that speak different languages. It can also have a practice of hiring language interpreters to work with staff when the latter is unable to communicate with clients of the organization.
- Diversity-competence includes multicultural competence and multilingual competence. It is not, however, limited to these two types of competence.
- In addition to multicultural competence and multilingual competence, diversity-competence includes something else, something not captured by the conventional understanding of culture and language, which associates the latter two with race, ethnicity and new immigrants. Diversity-competence includes the ability to value, understand and appropriately serve people of different social and economic groups (age groups, gender groups, economic groups, people with disabilities, etc.).
- Diversity-competence also includes the ability to see diversity not only among groups but to see diversity within an individual and within a group. For example, when serving a new immigrant, the diversity-competent organization takes not only ethno-cultural characteristics of the immigrant but also his social characteristics (age, income bracket, gender, etc.) into consideration. Similarly, when doing community outreach to an ethnic group or a particular gender orientation group, the diversity-competent organization does not see that group as a homogenous bloc of people. It acknowledges a wide range of socio-economic and other differences among the people in the group. This awareness of intra-group diversity allows the diversity-competent organization to reach out to different social and economic segments of a group in order to provide services to as many members of that group as possible.
- From a macro, societal perspective, diversity-competence differs from cultural and linguistic competence because the primary goal of diversity competence is not competence in understanding and serving different groups well. Its primary goal is the maintenance of diversity in a manner that is harmonious for all groups in society. Related goals are social unity, social stability, and social harmony. Cultural and linguistic competence are some of the means for achieving these goals. Other means include having competence in dealing with different age groups, different gender groups, different economic groups, different ability/disability groups, different ideological groups, etc. (The assumption underlying diversity-competence is that if you treat different groups equally, with respect, and in accordance with their values and beliefs, then there should be peace in the society.)

2.5 THE DIVERSITY-COMPETENT ORGANIZATION IN RELATION TO OTHER TYPES OF COMPETENT ORGANIZATIONS

- Monocultural Organizations (Cultural and Linguistic Competence for a Specific Group)**
- Non-Discriminatory Organizations (Legal Competence)**
- Diversity-Competent Organizations (Multicultural Competence, Multilingual Competence, Legal Competence, and Social Justice Competence)**

When seen in relation to the monocultural and non-discriminatory types of organizations and in relation to changes in the Canadian population, the diversity-competent organization appears to be a natural next step in the evolution of these latter types of competent organizations. It builds on the strengths of the monocultural and non-discriminatory organizations while striving to avoid and address their weaknesses.

☑ Monocultural Organizations (Cultural and Linguistic Competence for a Specific Group)

- A monocultural organization is competent in serving one particular cultural or social group. (For example, an organization for the elderly; an organization for Chinese immigrants.)
- Three particular strengths of the monocultural organization are the positive attitudes, knowledge and skills it has for serving the one group it was originally established to serve.
- A monocultural organization has very little awareness of the needs of diverse groups and how to provide services to them in appropriate ways.
- When a monocultural organization tries to serve other groups, it tends to use its existing monocultural perspective and competencies (a situation that often does not result in appropriate and effective services for persons of diverse social and cultural backgrounds).
- There are two major groups of monocultural organizations in Ontario: Euro-centric organizations and non-Euro-centric ethno-specific organizations. In everyday discussions within Ontario's human services sector, the European-based organizations have been termed "mainstream" organizations, and the non-European based agencies that focus overtly on specific ethnic groups have been called "ethno-specific" agencies.

Mainstream Euro-centric Organizations

- The majority of the human service agencies in Ontario are organizations with expertise in providing health and social services to persons from European backgrounds, especially those of British background.
- These "Euro-centric" organizations were established at a time in Ontario's history when the majority of the population consisted of White, Anglo-Celtic, Christian, English-speaking persons. As such, these organizations are a part of Ontario's history and have a wealth of knowledge and skills for the development of social policies, programs and services.
- In addition to their knowledge of European and Christian cultures, Ontario's "Euro-centric" organizations have expertise in the management and delivery of health and social services. They are, therefore, valuable assets for Canada's social and economic development.
- The Euro-centric organizations have been labelled "mainstream" agencies because of their long history and experience in providing services, and because their mandate dictates that they provide their services to all Canadians regardless of their social, ethnic or racial backgrounds.
- History, however, is dynamic, ever-changing, and Canada is no longer a country dominated by White, European, Christian, English-speaking people. Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Canada is the most multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-faith country in the world. Within this context, the traditional Euro-centric health and social service organizations in Canada need to develop their capacity to serve diverse groups in Canada - especially diverse racial and ethnic groups - equally, fairly, and in culturally appropriate ways.

Ethno-Specific (mostly non-European) Agencies

- In response to the Euro-centric nature of the traditional human service agencies in Canada and the limitations of those agencies for providing appropriate and effective services for non-European people, a new genre of monocultural human service agencies has come into existence. These agencies are often referred to as: “ethno-specific agencies.”
- Ethno-specific agencies tend to focus on the needs and interests of immigrants, refugees, and “visible minorities.”
- Their expertise lies in their positive attitudes towards these groups and their knowledge and skills for providing services to specific ethnic groups. Each of them is knowledgeable about a particular racial, ethnic, or nationalist group. Each of them can actually speak the language of a particular ethnic group.
- Unlike the traditional, Euro-centric organizations, however, these non-European, ethno-specific agencies do not exist to serve all Canadians, regardless of their cultural or racial backgrounds. Each of them exists to serve only a particular ethnic or racial group.
- Together, however, ethno-specific agencies serve many different ethnic and racial groups. (One of the characteristics of the new ethno-specific agencies is the fact that they tend to have relatively less financial resources than the mainstream agencies, a factor that often puts them at a disadvantage when they are working with mainstream agencies.)

Thus, the human services architecture of Canada (and especially of Ontario) at the beginning of the twenty-first century, looks like two parallel streams of monocultural service organizations. One stream is filled with Euro-centric organizations that are responsible for providing services to all Canadians, regardless of their ethnic/cultural backgrounds. (Hence, the term “mainstream” that is attributed to these organizations.) The other stream is filled mostly with different non-European, ethno-specific service organizations. Separately, simultaneously, these two monocultural streams of organizations flow into the Canadian population, depositing their services for all and some to use.

☑ Non-Discriminatory Organizations (Legal Competence)

- Government policies against discrimination place external pressure on monocultural organizations to evolve into non-discriminatory organizations, capable of serving more than one social or cultural group.
- Non-discriminatory organizations are aware of social and cultural differences among people and the legal and human rights context of discrimination against individuals by organizations and employers.
- Their expertise lies in their knowledge of the law governing the treatment of citizens and the provision of services to citizens. They strive to obey the law and maintain good public relations in order to avoid public conflict, lawsuits, etc. These organizations acknowledge diversity and manage it from a legalistic perspective.
- The emphasis on non-discrimination and the use of a legalistic perspective can be seen as an institutional response to the many social movements in the twentieth century: the Civil Rights movement, the feminist movement, the Gay Rights movement, the environmental movement, etc. These social movements located the primary cause of discrimination not at the individual level but at the organizational and systems levels. They consistently showed how organizations and the legal system practised discrimination through the nature of their organizational structures, policies, and procedures.
- Not surprisingly, therefore, the main emphasis of non-discriminatory organizations is on written policies and procedures for the prevention of discrimination and adherence to them by all members of the organizations. In their policies and procedures, these organizations overtly state their commitment to the values of diversity and equal opportunity for all citizens, regardless of their backgrounds. For example, they have an anti-racism policy, a policy against sexual harassment, a policy against discrimination towards people with disabilities, etc. In addition to their reliance on legalistic tools and procedures, non-discriminatory organizations tend to invest in training their employees about anti-discrimination, especially at the management level. A popular focus of the training industry during the 1980's and 1990's was the "managing diversity" focus.
- The typical non-discriminatory organization in Canada's human services sector is a "mainstream" monocultural, Euro-centric organization with a strong awareness of the growing diversity of the Canadian population and the need to respond effectively to the needs of that diverse population. These organizations strive to have a diverse workforce and to provide culturally appropriate services, but their dominant service culture is still a Euro-centric one, and leadership positions tend to be held mainly by people of European background. However, in the course of "managing diversity," the non-discriminatory organizations have the opportunity to become knowledgeable about the cultural and social backgrounds of different groups and the challenges faced by those groups. They are able to appreciate the need for diversity-competence.

☑ Diversity-Competent Organizations (Multicultural Competence, Multilingual Competence, Legal Competence, and Social Justice Competence)

- Diversity-competent organizations build on the strengths of the monocultural and non-discriminatory organizations, while avoiding their weaknesses. They can be seen as the natural “next step” in the evolution of these two types of competent organizations.
- Unlike monocultural organizations, diversity-competent organizations are capable of addressing the needs of many different groups in ways that are culturally and socially appropriate for each of those groups. They have the knowledge, skills, values, policies, partnerships and overall management infrastructure for serving different cultural and social groups at the same time.
- Unlike the monocultural, ethno-specific organizations that focus primarily on serving immigrants and visible minorities, diversity-competent organizations exist to serve all citizens regardless of their racial, cultural, religious or social backgrounds.
- Diversity-competent organizations do not favour one group over the other. Neither do they impose the cultural values of the dominant group of society on other groups.
- Building on the strengths of non-discriminatory organizations, diversity-competent organizations take an egalitarian or equal opportunity approach to each of the diverse groups that they serve.
- Unlike non-discriminatory organizations, however, diversity-competent organizations actively encourage and value diversity within and outside of themselves, not only for legal reasons but also for social justice reasons. They emphasize equity, sharing of power and privilege, end of oppression, etc.
- Their structures, policies, procedures, and services overtly reflect their valuing of diversity and their knowledge of the laws to prevent discrimination against diverse groups in society.
- They also develop their organizational and professional capacity for responding effectively to on-going cultural changes among their clients, workers, etc. They have a diverse workforce and provide culturally appropriate services to diverse groups in the community.
- Most importantly, the leadership positions within the diversity-competent organization are not dominated by persons from one or two cultural or social groups.
- Sometimes, diversity-competent organizations are referred to as “multicultural” organizations or “multiculturally-competent” organizations. This latter label should be resisted because it emphasizes competence in dealing with issues of ethnicity and culture, and downplays competence in dealing with differences pertaining to age, social class, gender orientation, physical and intellectual disabilities, etc.

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?