MODULE 5

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

SUMMARY OF MODULE

PURPOSE

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

CONTENT

Background: Defining Service Delivery

5.1   Service Delivery: Attitudes for Diversity-Competence

5.2   Service Delivery: Policies and Procedures for Diversity-Competence

5.3   Service Delivery: Knowledge/Information for Diversity-Competence

5.4   Service Delivery: Skills for Diversity-Competence

5.5   Service Delivery: Performance for Diversity-Competence

5.6   Service Delivery: Evaluation for Diversity-Competence

5.7   Service Delivery: Resources for Diversity-Competence

Questions for Review and Discussion

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENT

(See next page.)

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENT

Major Best Practices for Diversity-Competence at the Service Delivery Level

☑ **Policy**

- A service delivery policy that explicitly states the organization's commitment to providing high quality services to diverse groups and other policies that direct staff on how to provide those services.

☑ **Planning**

- Formal and informal acquisition of knowledge of the needs of diverse groups in the community, on a regular basis (needs assessments, networking, etc.).

- Service planning and delivery conducted in partnership with leaders and other representatives of the diverse groups in the community.

- Regular monitoring of the arrival or emergence of new/different groups in the community, and of changes in existing groups.

☑ **Marketing and Outreach**

- Service outreach and promotion to diverse groups in the community is conducted in socially and culturally appropriate ways (different languages, different media, etc.).

☑ **Service Delivery**

- The existence of a diverse client group (gender, age, race, culture, disabilities, class, etc.).

- Services provided by professionals trained to be diversity-competent.

- Services are socially and culturally appropriate for each client.

- Service delivery mechanisms are socially and culturally appropriate for each client.

- Services are available in different languages (including languages for people with hearing and visual disabilities).

- Service referral policies and practices link the organization to other organizations knowledgeable about serving specific population groups.

☑ **Evaluation**

- Issues of diversity and equity are taken into consideration when services are being evaluated.

- An assessment of the capacity of staff and volunteers to serve diverse groups.

☑ **Resources**

- Sufficient money and other resources are acquired to cover the additional costs involved in providing socially and culturally appropriate services to diverse groups.

Background: Defining Service Delivery

☑ **Service delivery refers to the most public and most visible parts of the organization:**

- the goods and services produced by the organization

- the face-to-face interaction between the organization and its clients or customers

- the physical areas within the organization where the service providers and clients interact with each other and where services are actually provided

- telephone relations

- internet relations

☑ **The people usually associated with service delivery are:**

- service managers

- frontline service workers (working directly with clients and customers)

- volunteers.

☑ **The activities usually associated with service delivery are:**

- service planning (needs assessment, program design, etc.)

- marketing and community outreach

- actual service delivery to individuals and groups

- referrals

- solicitation of feedback (from clients) on quality of services provided.

The services provided by an organization are visible, tangible indicators of whether or not the organization is indeed serving different groups effectively. The appropriateness of the services provided for different groups can be seen in the content, form and delivery of the services. In the case of human service agencies, the services are indistinguishable from the service providers, especially in the area of counselling services. The quality of the latter is often judged in relation to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the counsellor. Hence, the importance of providing services by well-trained, diversity-competent service providers. From this perspective, it is not difficult to see the connection between service delivery and the recruitment and training functions of the human resources department of an organization.

5.1 SERVICE DELIVERY: ATTITUDES FOR DIVERSITY COMPETENCE

In the diversity-competent organization, all staff – from managers to front-line staff - have to have non-discriminatory attitudes towards diverse groups in the community. This principle is especially important for front-line human services professionals who work directly, often in a face-to-face manner, with people of diverse racial, social and cultural backgrounds.

☑ **Attitudes to be Developed and Nurtured Among Frontline Staff and Volunteers**

☑ **Training for the Development of Positive Attitudes Towards Diverse Groups**

☑ **Artifacts Reflecting and Celebrating Diversity**

☑ Attitudes to be Developed and Nurtured Among Staff and Volunteers

- 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, and 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 all staff and volunteers, including human resources managers and staff supervisors, to help them understand and address systemic discrimination in society and organizations:

• Racism

• Sexism

• Homophobia

• Discrimination against persons with disabilities

• Classism

• Ageism

• Ethnocentrism

Training should be provided to all staff and volunteers:

• to understand their own attitudes towards people of diverse racial, social and culturalbackgrounds.

• 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 collaborating with different groups in the community in order to develop approprte and effective 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 places in which staff provide services to clients should reflect and celebrate diversity among human beings. The same applies to the staff room and other public spaces within the organization.

• pictures of people from diverse groups

• motivational posters extolling the virtues of diversity and team work

• art and sculpture from different cultures, etc.

5.2 SERVICE DELIVERY: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

If frontline workers and volunteers are to provide high quality services to diverse groups in the community, on a consistent basis, they have to be guided by organizational policies and procedures which direct them to do this. Furthermore, they have to be held accountable for complying with those policies and procedures.

☑ **General Corporate Policy Statement on Services for Diverse Groups**

☑ **Specific Policies and Procedures for Providing Services to Diverse Groups**

☑ **An Action Plan for Developing the Capacity of the Organization to Provide Services to Diverse Groups**

☑ **A Financial Plan for Developing the Capacity of the Organization to Provide Services to Diverse Groups**

☑ **A Communication Plan for Developing the Capacity of the Organization to Provide Services to Diverse Groups**

☑ **General Corporate Policy Statement on Services for Diverse Groups**

This is a general statement of the intention and commitment of the organization to provide services to diverse groups in the community in a manner that respects and responds to the particular characteristics and needs of those groups. This policy statement does not provide specific information on how the policy is to be implemented. Specific policies on implementation address this issue.

☑ **Specific Policies and Procedures for Providing Services to Diverse Groups (Examples)**

Planning of Services

- The planning of services should be based on current and factual information about diverse groups in the community.

- Planning of services for diverse groups should be done in partnership or in consultation with members of diverse groups.

- Whenever feasible, services should be custom-designed for specific groups in the community.

Marketing of Services

- Services should be marketed to the wide range of diverse groups in the community.

- The marketing strategies employed should be socially and culturally appropriate for the diverse groups served by the organization.

- The marketing strategy of the service organization should include utilization of the communications media and organizations (social, cultural, business and professional) of diverse groups in the community.

- Communication materials used to market services should be available in both English and other languages as much as possible.

Delivery of Services

- Services should be respectful and accommodative of the particular social and cultural characteristics of the client, while being in compliance with public laws and public policies.

- Services should be delivered by staff that are trained to provide services to people of diverse racial, social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds

- Services should be provided in different languages when necessary or requested.

- Professionally trained and certified language interpreters should be employed in cases where staff cannot communicate in the language of choice for the client.

- The physical space and facilities in which services are provided should be respectful and accommodative of the social, cultural and religious characteristics of clients.

Evaluation of Services

- Evaluation of services provided by the organization should include an assessment of the availability, accessibility, appropriateness and effectiveness of those services for diverse groups in the community

☑ **An Action Plan for Developing the Capacity of the Organization to Provide Services to Diverse Groups**

The Service Manager (s) should develop an action plan which specifies what service managers, staff supervisors, frontline workers and volunteers will do to develop and deliver services for diverse groups in the community. This action plan should specify what will be done, how it will be done, when, and by whom.

☑ **A Financial Plan for Developing the Capacity of the Organization to Provide Services to Diverse Groups**

In relation to the above action plan, the Service Manager (s) should estimate the cost of reviewing and re-developing the services that the organization currently provides in order to make them socially and culturally appropriate for diverse groups in the community.

☑ **A Communication Plan for Developing the Capacity of the Organization to Provide Services to Diverse Groups**

The Service Manager (s) should develop a plan for informing everyone in the organization about the organization's policies and plans for reviewing and re-developing the organization's services in order to make them socially and culturally appropriate for diverse groups in the community. At minimum, communication on this issue should include:

• policies and procedures for developing and delivering socially and culturally appropriate services for diverse groups in the community

• specific activities to be undertaken

• updates on work in progress

• updates on accomplishments

• updates on challenges

• request for on-going support of staff and volunteers

• contact information of persons responsible for the service delivery component of the organization's diversity-competence project.

5.3 SERVICE DELIVERY: KNOWLEDGE/INFORMATION FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

When it comes to service delivery, the diversity-competent organization relies on factual and accurate information about diverse groups in the community and the quality of the services it offers to those groups. Equally important, it is informed about the laws governing the provision of services to diverse groups in the community.

☑ **Information on the Laws Governing the Treatment of People from Different Groups**

☑ **Information on Different Groups in the Community**

☑ **An Assessment of the Services that the Organization Currently Provides to Different Groups in the Community (with emphasis on the extent to which those services are socially and culturally appropriate for diverse groups in the community)**

☑ **Information on the Laws Governing the Treatment of People from Different Groups**

- Legal information on the obligations and responsibilities of an organization for the treatment of staff and clients of diverse racial, social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. (Human rights legislation, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Employment Laws, etc.)

- A list of lawyers or legal firms that specialize in employment law, with emphasis on those that are knowledgeable about the non-profit sector, human services, and diversity issues.

☑ **Information on Different Groups in the Community (for Service Planning and Marketing)**

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 Services that the Organization Currently Provides to Different Groups in the Community (with emphasis on the extent to which the organization takes issues of diversity and equity into consideration when planning and delivering services to diverse groups in the community)**

Factual, Statistical Information

- Clients

  - Who are the people being served by the organization? Are they reflective of the diversity in the general population?

  - Which groups are hardly served by the organization? (Why?)

- Services Provided to Diverse Groups

  - What services are provided to different groups in the community?

  - When, where and how are these services provided?

Information Based on Professional Judgement of Staff and Clients

- Service Planning for Diverse Groups

  - How is service planning done to address the needs of diverse groups?

  - How does the organization go about developing services for a particular group in the community?

- Marketing and Outreach

  - How is marketing and outreach done to diverse groups in the community?

- Service Provision

  - How appropriate are the organization's services for a diverse community?

  - How do clients from diverse groups perceive the services of the organization?

  - How do community leaders of diverse groups perceive the services of the organization?

  - Which groups tend to be served well by the organization? Why?

  - Which groups are not well served by the organization? Why?

  - What problems are encountered by the organization when providing services to diverse groups in the community?

  - What problems do different groups in the community experience when trying to use the services offered by the organization?

  - How have these problems been addressed by the organization?

See also the information on "Performance" in Section 5.5 below.

5.4 SERVICE DELIVERY: SKILLS FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

In the case of human service agencies, the services they provide are often indistinguishable from the service providers, especially in the area of counselling services. The quality of the latter is often judged in relation to the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the counsellor. Hence, the importance of providing services by well-trained, diversity-competent service providers. From this perspective, it is not difficult to see the connection between service delivery and the recruitment and training functions of the human resources department of an organization.

☑ **Characteristics of the Diversity-Competent Counsellor**

☑ **Skills Training for Equal and Fair Treatment of Clients from Diverse Backgrounds**

☑ **Skills Training for the Provision of Appropriate and Effective Services to Diverse Groups**

☑ **Characteristics of the Diversity-Competent Counsellor**

• The diversity-competent counsellor is aware and knowledgeable of the diversity in the community served by her organization.

• She knows how to provide services to different groups of people in a manner that respects and integrates the different cultural and social values of those groups into the services to be provided.

• She is aware of her limitations and is capable of making relevant and appropriate referrals for her clients.

• The diversity-competent counsellor has developed her competence in at least the following six areas:

  - understanding of her own world view, cultural values and beliefs;

  - awareness of client's world-view, cultural values and beliefs;

  - ability to use an anti-oppression and social justice approach to service delivery;

  - ability to use socially and culturally appropriate intervention strategies with different clients.

  - ability to formally and informally network with professional colleagues and community-leaders from different groups in the community; and

  - ability to make appropriate referrals for clients from different social and cultural groups.

• In the case of counsellors from the dominant ethnic group in society:

  - the counsellor is aware of the privileges that she enjoys because of her membership in that group;

  - the counsellor is aware of the disadvantages suffered by her clients who are not members of the dominant ethnic group in society; and

  - the counsellor is also aware of the impact of social class on her own life and those of her clients.

These characteristics and competencies of the counsellor help to prevent her from imposing her own social and cultural values and beliefs on her clients. Similarly, they help the counsellor to focus on the social and cultural values and beliefs of the clients and to integrate them into the intervention strategy for the clients.

☑ **Skills Training for Equal and Fair Treatment of Clients from Diverse Backgrounds**

• Anti-oppression training (in relation to racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, people with disabilities, poor people, etc.; see earlier section 5.1 on "Attitudes.")

• Understanding diversity in the community (The size, growth, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of diverse groups in the community; see Section 5.3 above.)

• Cross-cultural communication

• Cross-cultural conflict management

☑ **Skills Training for the Provision of Appropriate and Effective Services to Diverse Groups**

• An orientation to cultural-competence in service provision

• An orientation to linguistic competence in service provision

• How to plan services that have to be accessible and appropriate for diverse groups in the community

• How to market services to diverse groups in the community

• How to deliver services to diverse groups in the community

• How to provide individual counselling services to clients from diverse racial, social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds

• How to provide group counselling services to clients from diverse racial, social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds

• The provision of telephone-based services for diverse groups in the community

• How to provide information and referral services to individual clients from diverse racial, social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds

• Customized training in how to plan, market, deliver and evaluate services for a specific social or ethno-racial or ethno-cultural group. (For example, counselling Tamil victims of domestic violence, counselling for elderly widowers, after school programs for Afro-Canadian youth, etc.)

• How to evaluate services for diverse groups in the community

5.5 SERVICE DELIVERY: PERFORMANCE FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

The performance of frontline workers and volunteers, with respect to the direct delivery of services to people from diverse groups is the actual application of the training provided to them for this purpose and the policies and procedures developed to guide their work with clients. Hence, the performance of frontline staff and volunteers in the diversity-competent organization should be reflective of the training and policies provided by the organization to ensure that diverse groups in the community are well served by the organization.

Indicators of Successful Performance in the Following Areas:

☑ **Policy**

☑ **Planning**

☑ **Marketing and Outreach**

☑ **Service Delivery**

☑ **Evaluation**

☑ **Resources**

☑ Policy

A service delivery policy that explicitly states the organization's commitment to providing high quality services to diverse groups and other policies that direct staff on how to provide those services.

☑ Planning

- Formal and informal acquisition of knowledge of the needs of diverse groups in the community, on a regular basis (needs assessments, networking, etc).

- Service planning and delivery conducted in partnership with leaders and other representatives of the diverse groups in the community.

- Regular monitoring of the arrival or emergence of new/different groups in the community, and of changes in existing groups.

☑ Marketing and Outreach

Service outreach and promotion to diverse groups in the community is conducted in socially and culturally appropriate ways (different languages, different media, etc.).

☑ Service Delivery

- The existence of a diverse client group (gender, age, race, culture, disabilities, class, etc.).

- Services provided by professionals trained to be diversity-competent.

- Services are socially and culturally appropriate for each client.

- Service delivery mechanisms are socially and culturally appropriate for each client.

- Services are available in different languages (including languages for people with hearing and visual disabilities).

- Service referral policies and practices link the organization to other organizations knowledgeable about serving specific population groups.

☑ Evaluation

- Issues of diversity and equity are taken into consideration when services are being provided.

- An assessment of the capacity of staff and volunteers to serve diverse groups.

☑ Resources

Sufficient money and other resources are acquired to cover the additional costs involved in providing socially and culturally appropriate services to diverse groups.

5.6   SERVICE DELIVERY: EVALUATION FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

- ☑ **A conceptual framework for evaluating the services provided by the organization for diverse groups in the community. (Use the information provided in this module, especially Section 5.3 on "Knowledge/Information" and Section 5.5 on "Indicators of Successful Performance.")**

- ☑ **A procedure(s) for conducting the evaluation (methods, sources of data, etc.)**

- ☑ **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**

5.7 SERVICE DELIVERY: RESOURCES FOR DIVERSITY-COMPETENCE

Reviewing and re-designing services to make them socially and culturally appropriate for diverse groups in the community are major organizational development tasks.   To be done effectively, these tasks require commitment on the part of the organization, time and money. Moreover, these tasks are too complex to be added on to the existing list of tasks that staff are already performing. Additional labour is required. Additional supervision is required.

☑ **Senior Management Support**

☑ **Internal Champions**

☑ **External Champions/Resource Persons**

☑ **Professional Labour and Services**

☑ **Time**

☑ **Money**

☑ Senior Management Support

- Consensus between the Board, senior management and service managers that the latter should undertake the development of services that are socially and culturally appropriate for diverse groups in the community.

- Consensus between service managers and frontline staff and volunteers that they should work together to develop and deliver services that are socially and culturally appropriate for diverse groups in the community.

- Commitment of service management staff to be supportive of frontline staff and volunteers in developing and delivering services that are socially and culturally appropriate for diverse groups in the community.

☑ Internal Champions

- The CEO or Executive Director should appoint a Service Manager to be the leader of the organization's efforts to develop and deliver relevant and appropriate services for diverse groups in the community.

- The Service Manager should appoint some front-line staff and staff supervisors to form a working group for the development and delivery of services for diverse groups in the community. This group should be co-chaired by the Service Manager and a representative of the Board of Directors.

- The main focus of the service delivery working group should be to assess the services being provided and re-design them to be socially and culturally appropriate for diverse groups in the community.

☑ External Champions/Resource Persons

- Professional networks or associations that focus on diversity and equity issues in the human services sector, with an emphasis on service planning and service delivery.

- Service managers and frontline staff in other organizations who are knowledgeable about diversity and equity issues, and about specific groups in the community.

- Organizations that specialize in providing services to specific groups (ethno-specific agencies, organizations dedicated to service provision for particular age groups or gender groups, etc.).

The Service Manager and/or some of the members of his or her diversity-competence working group 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 in delivering socially and culturally appropriate services to diverse groups in the community.

☑ **Professional Labour and Services (existing staff or staff hired specifically for particular functions)**

• Project leader/coordinator (Existing Service Manager or new staff/consultant)

• Staff/consultants for development of policies and procedures, research, etc.

• Trainer(s)

• Clerical support for service delivery working group and staff and consultants involved

• Legal services, if necessary

☑ **Time**

• To recruit staff or consultants to assist the service delivery working group.

• To develop and implement the policies and procedures for providing socially and culturally appropriate services for diverse groups in the community.

• To acquire the necessary information, do the required assessments, surveys, etc.

• To provide training to staff and volunteers.

• To do a diversity-competence audit of existing services.

• To participate in inter-agency networks and professional associations that address issues of diversity and equity at the service delivery level.

• To seek funding for the specific projects and tasks identified by the service delivery working group.

• To make mistakes and learn from them.

☑ **Money**

• To purchase the professional labour and services required.

• To purchase training materials and other resources of relevance to diversity-competence issues.

• 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. for the offices of staff, meeting rooms for clients and other public spaces in the building[s] of the organization).

• To purchase legal services 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