Diversity Competence in Permanency Planning

Note Taking Guide

At the end of this module, you will be able to:
- Assess their diversity competence
- Identify the elements of diversity competence
- Describe the barriers to improving diversity competence
- Explain the importance of cultural humility in their work with children and families
- Work with children and families in accordance with ICWA and MEPA
- Effectively engage with families across diverse populations
- Help families determine the type of child that would be best supported in their family
- Help the family be open to adjusting their lifestyle to better support the child’s diversity
- Share strategies with the family that will support the child’s development and identity

Introductions and Overview

We can’t become an “expert” in all things that make someone diverse, but we can develop the ability to interact with, learn from, and understand the “larger picture” from another’s point of view.

Key Terms

- Diversity
- Culture
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Gender
Elements of Diversity Competence

When we understand how we are different from others, and appreciate these differences, we can foster authentic relationships. This skill is known as diversity competence. Diversity competence includes:

A. Understanding of the “dynamics of difference” in the helping process
B. Awareness of their own diversity including attitudes, beliefs, standards of behavior, and values
C. Awareness and appreciation of diversity
D. Ability to establish a trusting, professional relationships across diverse populations
E. Ability to adapt practice skills to fit the needs of the child or family
F. Ability to communicate effectively across diverse populations

1. Cultural humility
2. Self-awareness
3. Appreciative inquiry
4. Inclusion
5. Reserving Judgment
6. Adaptable

Coulborn Faller and Ortega (2011) identified six principals of cultural humility for those who work with children and families:

1. Embrace the complexity of diversity
2. “Know thyself” and critically challenge one’s “openness to learn from others”
3. Accept cultural differences and relate to children and families in ways that are most understandable to them
4. Continuously engage in collaborative helping
5. Demonstrate familiarity with the living environment of children and families being served.
6. Build organizational support that demonstrates cultural humility as an import and ongoing aspect of the work itself.
Barriers to Diversity Competence

If we understand what our barriers are, we can more likely work towards overcoming them

1. Implicit Bias
2. Stereotyping
3. Isms & Phobias
4. Discrimination
5. System of Oppression
6. Ethnocentrism
7. Color-blind
8. Microaggression

What is the bias?

- A family who is Muslim and observing Ramadan would like placement of a non-Muslim child.
- A family in which both parents work full-time would like to be licensed to care for medically fragile children.
- A cisgender couple, new to fostering, wishes to take teens into their home. They do not have any experience with non-binary children, and you have a youth that needs placement that does not identify as male or female.
- A couple in their late 70’s would like to adopt their grandchild.
- A paternal aunt would like to adopt her niece who has been in foster care for two years and lives with a foster family who wants to adopt her.
- A birth mother whose child has been in permanent custody for several years has completed her recovery treatment and would like to parent.

Disproportionality

- Disproportionality: “The underrepresentation or overrepresentation of a racial or ethnic group compared to its percentage in the total population” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016)

- Disparity: “The unequal outcomes of one racial or ethnic group as compared to outcomes for another racial/ethnic group” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016)
ICWA

The Bureau of Indian Affairs reports ICWA oversees state child-custody hearings by:

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An Indian Child is defined as any unmarried person under 18 who is either:

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True or False?

ICWA...

1. ___ was important in the 1970s but it’s no longer needed now
2. ___ was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in Adoptive Couple v. Baby Girl
3. ___ is a race-based law
4. ___ applies to all children who identify as Native American
5. ___ applies only to involuntary proceedings
6. ___ applies in divorce proceedings and custody battles between two biological parents
7. ___ only requires efforts to protect Indian children after they are removed from their home
8. ___ ignores the best interests of Indian children
9. ___ funnels Indian children into placements on reservations that are bad places for children
10. ___ favors Indian family members over non-Indian family members
MEPA

MEPA contains three central provisions:

- Prohibits use of a child’s or prospective parent’s RCNO to delay or deny the child’s placement
- Requires states to provide for diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children for whom homes are needed.
- Cannot deny a foster or adoptive family based solely on RCNO

Engagement

Engagement in the context of diversity:

- Take time to build a relationship
- Support the family’s strengths and decision-making
- Guide them in the process
- Adapt to the family’s diversity

Consider aspects of diversity such as social distance and touching, the meaning of eye contact, the level of formality in addressing a person, nonverbals related to level of engagement, and idioms/jargon.

1. How could differences in your assigned aspect of diversity create barriers to engagement?
2. What strategies could you use to overcome the barriers?

Transfer of Learning

A great way to reinforce learning is to explain it to another person!

- Recall two concepts you’ve learned so far
- Pair up and give an “elevator pitch”
Review of Day One

Welcome back!

Child Assessment

- Where to gather the information:
- What information to gather:
- When should the information be gathered?
- How should the information be recorded?

In your small groups, generate a list of questions to ask a child or activities you could do with a youth to capture their diversity? Discuss why this information is significant to collect. Record your ideas below.
Diversity Competence in the Family Assessment

Assessors must be diversity competent to conduct an effective homestudy. It can help to remember the acronym DARE:
- Describe rather than interpret
- Ask questions and listen
- Remember the influence of your diversity
- Evaluate your conclusions and look for any implicit bias

Assessors must follow MEPA guidelines. Families cannot be required to do any additional assessment based on RCNO. Assessors can talk to families about their values, codes of conduct, traditions, religion, and community resources.

Practice: Is the family different, dysfunctional, or do you need more information?
1. A single gay man is interested only in fostering male youth who identify as gay.
2. An older couple intends to homeschool their foster children. An adult child of the couple has expressed her regret in being homeschooled by her mother.
3. A single woman who uses a wheelchair is interested in fostering newborns to age two.
4. A first generation Iranian-American family hopes to share their culture with the children they foster.
5. An older, farming couple does not own televisions, cell phones, a computer, or tablet.

Family Assessment – Family’s Diversity

Aspects of a family’s diversity (i.e. language, level of privacy, importance of humility) will affect how they participate in the homestudy.

Ideas on how to highlight a family’s diversity in each of the Homestudy categories:

Assigned Category: __________________________________________

Ideas:
Matching

All families are different so every child will be going into a placement that is different from their family of origin. When making placement decisions, consider:

- Placement with family or kin
- Preferences of the child, the primary family, and the foster/adoptive family
- Your implicit bias

Which family can best meet the children’s needs? Draw a line between the child and the family.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Jerry &amp; James</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amber &amp; Kelley</td>
<td>Lisa &amp; Carissa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sloan</td>
<td>Jack &amp; Jill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Bailey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regina</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jason</td>
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Supporting Positive Identity Development

Identity is concerned largely with the question: Who are you? It includes your personal self, social self, and your racial/ethnic identity.

Think of a critical incident in your life and consider:
Event: 
Age when event occurred:

1. How did you feel during and after the event?
2. What insights did you gain from the event?
3. How does this event and the impact it had on you relate to your work in foster care or adoption?

How might the integrated model apply to:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Youth who identify as LGBTQ</th>
<th>Youth with disabilities</th>
<th>Youth who are in foster care or adopted</th>
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Assessors can support identity development by:
- Assessing where the family is in developing diversity competence and providing support appropriately
- Encouraging the family to:
  - Make the home safe for all
  - Allow the youth the freedom to express themselves
  - Allow the youth to explore their past and stay connected to their cultural heritage
  - Address issues of racism and discrimination
Identity Development in Overrepresented Populations

Populations overrepresented in the child welfare system include youth of color, youth who identify as LGBTQ, and youth with disabilities.

Ideas for supporting:

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For several reasons, it is not uncommon for youth of color to be placed transracially.

**Struggle for Identity** – part one:

1. What were the feelings of the young adults growing up in multi-racial families?
2. How did the adoptive parents assist with the racial identity formation of their children?
3. Did the parents unwittingly create any barriers for their children?
4. What should be the agency’s role in supporting families who parent transracially? [NOTE: Agencies cannot require that families adopting or fostering transracially develop parenting plans or attend special training on transracial family life. Such requirements would violate tenets of MEPA]
5. What were some of the suggestions the young adults and parents made for families/systems?
Struggle for Identity – part two:
1. Have the adoptees’ views of their experiences changed? If so, how?
2. Do they view their parents any differently?
3. What were their suggestions for others who might adopt transracially?

Action Planning

Think about the two concepts you highlighted in the “elevator speech” you wrote on day one.

Select one of the concepts and consider:

1. Who can you share the concept with? (sharing information with others helps it to stick in our memory)

2. How can you incorporate the concept into the work you do?

3. How can you help to ensure the concept is embraced by your agency?
RESOURCES
The Danger of a Single Story
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story


Identity and Diversity

LGBTQ Resources for Child Welfare Professionals https://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-additional-resources

Children and Youth with Disabilities in the Child Welfare System

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

OAC
ICWA
5101:2-53-01 (Definitions related to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA))
5101:2-53-02 (General provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA))
5101:2-53-03 (Determination of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA))
5101:2-53-04 (Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) notice requirements)
5101:2-53-05 (Voluntary agreement for temporary custody of Indian child)
5101:2-53-06 (Emergency removal and involuntary custody of Indian children)
5101:2-53-07 (Permanent surrender or parental consent to adoptive placement of Indian children)
5101:2-53-08 (Placement preference of Indian children)
5101:2-53-09 (Procedures for the transfer of Indian Children to a tribal court, a tribal Title IV-E agency or an Indian tribe with a Title IV-E agreement)

MEPA
5101:2-33-03 (Procedure for Complaints of Alleged Discriminatory Acts, Policies or Practices in the Foster Care or Adoption Process that Involve Race, Color or National Origin)
5101:2-33-11 (Multietnic Placement Act (MEPA0 Agency Administrative Requirements)
5101:2-48-13 (Non-Discrimination Requirements for Adoptive Placements)
5101:2-42-18.1 (Non-Discrimination Requirements for Foster Care Placements)

Forms
JFS 02333 Discrimination Complaint
JFS 01607 MEPA Educational Materials
JFS 01608 Licensed Professional’s Statement
JFS 01688 Individualized Child Assessment
JFS 01688-I Instructions for Completing JFS 01688, Individualized Child Assessment