

Family  **PACT**

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OFFICE OF FAMILY PLANNING

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Linguistic and Cultural Competency Toolkit

Prepared by California Family Health Council for
California Department of Public Health
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Family PACT Program

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Additional copies and resources available at
www.familypact.org/en/Providers/CulturalCompetency.aspx

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Introduction

This Toolkit on Linguistic and Cultural Competency was especially designed for Family PACT providers. Take advantage of its easy-to-use assessment tool and its helpful resources.

This introductory section highlights:

- An Overview of the Toolkit contents
- A Definition of Linguistic and Cultural Competence

Preface

The California Department of Public Health, Office of Family Planning, is providing the Linguistic and Cultural Competency Toolkit to all Family PACT providers in an effort to assist them in meeting the Linguistic and Cultural Competence standards listed in the Family PACT *Policies, Procedures, and Billing Instructions* (PPBI) manual.

It reads:

PPBI Standard C. Linguistic and Cultural Competence (PPBI, Page 9.3)

1. All services shall be provided in a culturally sensitive manner and communicated in a language understood by the client.
2. All print and audiovisual materials shall be appropriate for the client's language and literacy level.

This Toolkit is made up of several components:

- **Overview.** This explains the purpose of the Toolkit and its components.
- **Definition of Linguistic and Cultural Competence.** This definition was created specifically for Family PACT providers and includes standards for providing linguistically and culturally competent care.
- **Instructions for Administering the Self-Assessment Survey.** This section will help staff administering the survey understand how to conduct, analyze, and use the results of the survey to improve the health care services provided to their clients.
- **Linguistic and Cultural Competency Self-Assessment Survey for Family PACT Providers.** This survey could be administered to all staff working in a Family PACT provider's office or agency.

- **Understanding Your Results.** This comprehensive description will help agencies analyze the results of the self-assessment process.
- **Developing a Strategic Plan.** This section provides helpful strategies Family PACT providers can use to improve linguistic and cultural competence both individually and organizationally.
- **Resources.** This section of the Toolkit provides a wealth of books, resources, tools, and websites to complement Family PACT providers' efforts in this area.

By administering the survey and analyzing its results, Family PACT providers and their agencies will be able to assess how well prepared they are in meeting the linguistic and cultural needs of the clients they serve.

This Toolkit is designed as an in-house tool to enable Family PACT providers to:

- Assess the degree to which their agency meets the standards and requirements of the Family PACT program.
- Plan and implement training and support for staff to better meet the reproductive health care needs of the clients served.

The Linguistic and Cultural Competency Self-Assessment Survey for Family PACT Providers itself is simple yet comprehensive. The questions are easy to understand and to answer. Using the strategies and resources provided with this Toolkit, Family PACT providers will be able to quickly analyze the results and develop a strategic plan for improving their services.

Family PACT providers can visit the website at www.familypact.org to obtain other resources and tools to assist them in their efforts to assess their competencies in this area and to develop a strategic plan.

Overview

This Toolkit includes several components that you, as a Family PACT provider, are sure to find useful.

Definition of Linguistic and Cultural Competence

The perfect place to start, this section explains exactly what the Family PACT program encourages Family PACT providers to do in order to enhance the services they provide. Becoming linguistically and culturally competent is a win-win proposition.

- If your clients find your services more respectful and honoring of their health beliefs and values, they will feel more comfortable. These clients will return for services and recommend them to others in their community.
- Your communication with your clients will improve and you will begin to see better health outcomes and more adherence to your medical advice.
- Your agency will become accessible to new Family PACT clients.

Instructions for Administering Self-Assessment Survey

This section provides step-by-step instructions on how to administer the Self-Assessment Survey.

- The results of this survey are for your internal use only.
- The survey results are completely anonymous and confidential.
- Your agency staff will determine how to use the results.

- The results do not need to be reported to Family PACT.

Linguistic and Cultural Competency Self-Assessment Survey for Family PACT Providers

This easy-to-use survey was designed to be filled out by all staff members of a Family PACT office or agency. The administrator of the survey should:

- Copy enough surveys for the staff participating in the survey.
- Distribute the survey at a staff meeting or other forum.
- Allow staff to complete and return the form anonymously.
- Analyze the data and present the results at a staff meeting.
- Create a strategic plan for improvement.

Understanding Your Results

This section explains step by step how to analyze your results. It will help you:

- Analyze survey results.
- Prioritize needed changes.

Developing a Strategic Plan

This helpful section outlines possible strategies you can use in creating a plan to improve the linguistic and cultural competency of your staff and the way your agency functions. Use the section to:

- Identify practical activities for reaching your objectives.
- Create a strategic plan for enhancing the way you serve your clients.

Resources

This section provides a wealth of resources you can use to improve the way your office or agency provides linguistically and culturally competent services. Featured are resources that can help your agency:

- Enhance cultural competency training and staff development.
- Learn more about health literacy and how to assess and upgrade health education for your clients.
- Find ways to work with interpreters more effectively in your setting.
- Improve outreach strategies for your agency.

Definition of Linguistic and Cultural Competence

Linguistic and cultural competence is the ability of Family PACT providers to understand and respond effectively to the cultural and linguistic needs brought by the clients to the health care encounter. Linguistic and cultural competence requires recognizing and addressing clients' behaviors, values, practices, attitudes, and beliefs as they affect their reproductive health care. Being linguistically and culturally competent will lead to improved communication between providers and clients who may be from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

To demonstrate continual progress, Family PACT providers are encouraged to:

- Ensure services received from staff are in a manner compatible with clients' cultural beliefs, practices, and preferred language.
- Pursue continuous expansion of individual cultural knowledge and resources.
- Recruit staff and board members who reflect the client population served.
- Support ongoing cultural competency training for all staff (front office, clinical staff, and administration) and board members.
- Offer and provide language assistance services, including bilingual staff and interpreter services, at no cost to clients with Limited English Proficiency.

Family PACT providers should also:

- Provide easy-to-read client education materials in the languages of the clients served.
- Provide a client-friendly front office with signage posted in the languages commonly served by the practice.

- Develop collaborative partnerships with agencies that advocate for and represent the diverse populations in one's community.
- Develop a strategic plan that includes cultural and linguistic competence.

Here are some operating assumptions about “culture”:

- The word “culture” denotes a group's patterns of behavior, values, norms, and practices.
- Culture is dynamic in that it continually changes. Therefore, staff knowledge and skills in communicating with clients of different cultural groups should be addressed on an ongoing basis.
- In this document, the term “culture” is not limited to different ethnic and racial groups. It is inclusive of other types of cultural groupings by age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. For example, teens may be considered a cultural group with different health needs than that of adults or children.
- The cultural make-up of the clients served by Family PACT providers also changes continually due to immigration trends, levels of acculturation and assimilation, as well as other factors. For example, the length of time clients have lived in the same region, as well as when they immigrated, may have an affect on their health beliefs and practices.

Here are two ways to look at linguistic and cultural competence:

- Individual linguistic and cultural competence describes the ability of individual providers and staff to apply their knowledge of cultural behavior and language when interacting with clients from diverse backgrounds.
- Organizational linguistic and cultural competence is the way in which the agency makes its services, programs, and resources accessible to all clients regardless of their linguistic ability and cultural background.

In order for Family PACT providers to be effective in working within a culturally diverse community, they need to:

- Assess how well all of their agency's systems, programs, services and resources, staff members, and administrators meet the needs of the communities they serve.
- Ensure that verbal and written communications are provided in plain, everyday language that most people can understand. This is true no matter what language is used. It is recognized that most people do not understand the technical jargon often used by health care professionals and that it is incumbent on health professionals to speak in a way that is easy to comprehend and that builds on a clients' life experiences.
- Provide written materials at the 5th grade level or less. The information in an educational material should be provided at a reading level the majority of the client population can read and understand. Research on literacy in the United States suggests a reading level at the 5th grade or below is the most appropriate for the general population.

Increased linguistic and cultural competence (both individual and organizational) will improve health care access and service delivery for all clients.