Family PACT Program

Cultural and Linguistic Competency Toolkit

Rev. 2012


Additional copies and resources available at www.familypact.org/en/Providers/CulturalCompetency.aspx
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This Toolkit on Cultural and Linguistic 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 Cultural and Linguistic Competence
Preface

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

It reads:

**PPBI Standard C. Cultural and Linguistic 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 Cultural and Linguistic Competence.** This definition was created specifically for Family PACT providers and includes standards for providing culturally and linguistically competent care.
- **Instructions for Administering the Self-Assessment Survey.** This section will help staff administrating the survey understand how to administer, compile, analyze, and use the results of the survey to improve the health care services provided to their clients.
- **Cultural and Linguistic Competency Self-Assessment Survey.** 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 cultural and linguistic 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 responding to the cultural and linguistic 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.
- Comply with the Federal Cultural & Linguistic Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards.

The Cultural and Linguistic Competency Self-Assessment Survey itself is simple yet comprehensive. Its development was informed by the Federal Cultural & Linguistic Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards to provide agencies with a means of adhering to these national standards. 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 Cultural and Linguistic 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 culturally and linguistically 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 greater adherence to your medical advice.
- Your agency will become more 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.

**Cultural and Linguistic 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.
• Compile and analyze the data and present the results at a staff meeting.
• Create a strategic plan for improvement.

**Tip:** The survey can be adapted to an online format that staff can complete online. You can provide staff with access to a computer, work time to fill it out, and a private space to ensure anonymity.

**Understanding Your Results**

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

• Compile and 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 cultural and linguistic competency of your staff and the way your agency functions. Use this section to:

- Identify practical activities for reaching your objectives.
- Create a strategic plan for enhancing the way you serve your clients.
- Identify and modify existing policies that address your proposed activities, or create new ones to assist you in carrying out these activities.
Resources

This section provides a wealth of resources you can use to improve the way your office or agency provides culturally and linguistically 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 Cultural and Linguistic Competence

Cultural and linguistic competence is the ability of Family PACT providers to understand and respond effectively to the cultural and linguistic needs brought to the health care encounter by the clients, providers, and the organization. Cultural and linguistic competence requires recognizing and addressing clients’ behaviors, values, practices, attitudes, and beliefs as they affect their reproductive health care. Being culturally and linguistically 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, management, 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 activities to enhance the organization’s commitment to responding effectively to the cultural and linguistic needs of the population served.

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 religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, and socio-economic status. 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 affect their health beliefs and practices.

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

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