

## People Who Are Aging: Supporting Them Well in Multiple Contexts



REINVENTING QUALITY 2010  
Doing Right by People in Challenging Times

August 9, 2010  
Baltimore, MD

## PEOPLE WHO ARE AGING: The Role of Cultural and Linguistic Competence

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## Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Define culture and describe its multiple dimensions.
- Describe cultural influences and beliefs related to aging, end of life, and disability.
- Describe the essential role of cultural and linguistic competence in supporting individuals who are aging and their families.

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## Some thoughts about aging...

- **And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.** *Abraham Lincoln*
- **Perhaps one has to be very old before one learns to be amused rather than shocked.** *Pearl S. Buck*
- **When I passed forty I dropped pretense, 'cause men like women who got some sense.** *Maya Angelou*
- **No matter how old a mother is, she watches her middle-aged children for signs of improvement.** *Florida Scott-Maxwell*
- **First you are young; then you are middle-aged; then you are old; then you are wonderful.** *Lady Diana Cooper*
- **The older I grow the more I distrust the familiar doctrine that age brings wisdom.** *H.L. Mencken*
- **Those who love deeply never grow old; they may die of old age, but they die young.** *Sir Arthur Pinero*



Data Source: <http://www.best-quotes-poems.com/age-quotes.html> retrieved 8.8.10

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What could be more universal than death?  
Yet what an incredible variety  
of responses it evokes.

Metcalf & Huntington, 1991, p.24

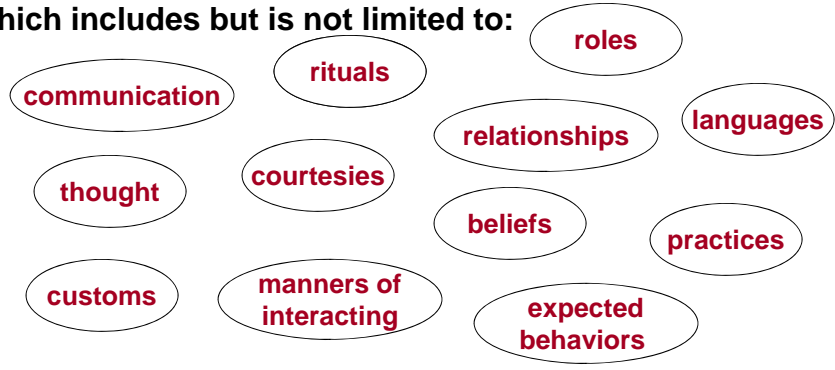
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## Exploring the Multiple Dimensions of Culture

# Culture

**Culture** is an integrated pattern of human behavior which includes but is not limited to:



... of a racial, ethnic, religious, social, political, professional group; the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations; dynamic in nature.

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## Culture is ...

- applicable to all peoples
- multi-layered
- malleable over time
- viewed as thick, thin or compartmentalized
- always considered within a context



Adapted from Vivian Jackson, NCCC, 2003

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# Culture

- structures perceptions
- shapes behaviors
- is the total way of life – it tells group members how to behave and provides their identity



Adapted from Vivian Jackson, NCCC, 2003

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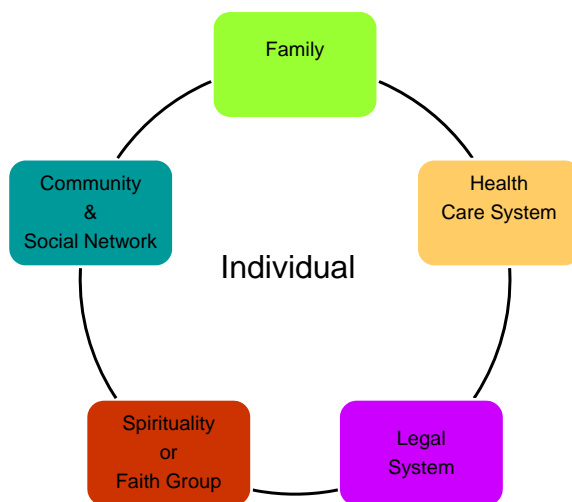
# Culture is the Lens by Which We View the World



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## Convergence of Cultural Contexts



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Why are cultural competence and linguistic competence essential to support individuals and families as they age and for addressing end of life



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## Diversity and Differing World Views



## Cultural Factors That Influence Diversity Among Individuals and Groups

### Internal Factors

- Cultural/Racial/Ethnic Identity
- Tribal Affiliation/Clan
- Nationality
- Acculturation/Assimilation
- Socioeconomic Status/Class
- Education
- Language
- Literacy
- Family Constellation
- Social History
- Perception of Time
- Health/Mental Health Beliefs & Practices
- Health Literacy
- Perception of Disability or Mental Health
- Lived Experience of Disability or Mental Illness
- Age & Life Cycle Issues
- Gender, Gender Identity & Expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion & Spiritual Views
- Spatial & Regional Patterns
- Political Orientation/Affiliation

Adapted with permission from James Mason, Ph.D., NCCC Senior Consultant

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## Cultural Beliefs about Age

Old people in most traditional societies are typically accorded social respect and honor, as well as a significant degree of power and control within their societies. This view of elders in traditional societies is true for both women and men.



Data Source: Free, M. (2002). The aging of America: culture, stress, and sex. Dallas . TX: Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings 15:74-76.

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## Cultural Beliefs about Age

In industrial societies, old age is not generally a revered status and elders may not always be honored within their families or among their friends and other associates, as well as in society at large. This is more often the case of female elders.



Data Source: Free, M. (2002). The aging of America: culture, stress, and sex. Dallas . TX: Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings 15:74-76.

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## Cultural Perceptions and “A Good Old Age”

Researchers found across cultural groups that a “good old age” is characterized by four major factors:

- Physical health and functioning
- Material security
- Family
- Sociality



Data Source: Fry, C. Dickerson-Putman, J., Draper, P., Ikels, C., Keith, P., Glascock, A., & Harpending, H. (2008). Culture and the Meaning of a Good Old Age. In Jay Sokolovsky (Ed.) *The cultural context of aging – Worldwide perspective 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Westport, CT. Praeger Publishers.

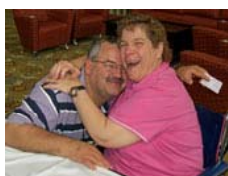
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## COMMUNITY, SOCIAL NETWORK, FAMILY

Cultural Perceptions and Beliefs about:

- causes of illness & disability
- people who experience disability
- aging
- death and end of life



Source: Goode, T. & Maloof, P. (2010). End of Life through a Cultural Lens. In S. Friedman & D. Helm *End-of-Life Care for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities*. Washington, DC: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

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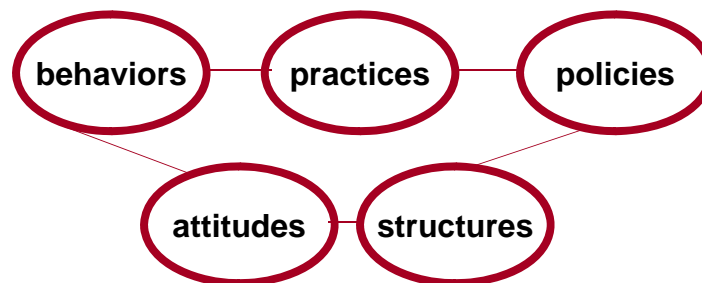


## Cultural and Linguistic Competence Definitions & Frameworks

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## Cultural Competence



requires that organizations have a clearly defined, congruent set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies, structures, and practices that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally

(adapted from Cross, Bazron, Dennis and Isaacs, 1989)

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## Five Elements of Cultural Competence

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### Organizational Level

- value diversity
- conduct cultural self-assessment
- manage the dynamics of difference
- institutionalize cultural knowledge
- adapt to diversity
  - policies - structures
  - values - services

(Cross, Bazron, Dennis and Isaacs, 1989)

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## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN A CULTURALLY COMPETENT SYSTEM

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These five elements must be manifested at every level of an organization including:

- policy makers
- administration
- practice & service delivery
- individual/patient/consumer/family
- community

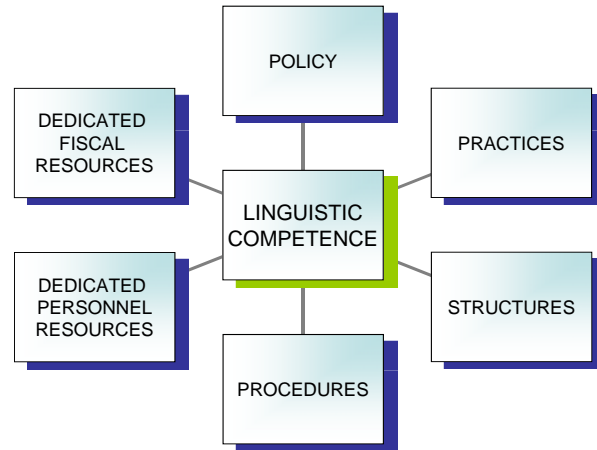
and reflected in its attitudes, structures, policies, practices, and services.

Adapted from Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989

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## LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK



Goode & Jones, Revised 2009

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## Ensuring Cultural and Linguistic Competence within Your Organization

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## **Cultural and Linguistic Competence** **From Conceptual Frameworks to Policy & Practice**

### Value Diversity

- Ensure organizational philosophy recognizes the diversity of cultural expressions, traditions, and norms associated with aging and end of life.
- Actively seek and include individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic groups as members of your organization's advisory committees and governing boards.

Source: Goode, T. & Maloof, P. (2010). End of Life through a Cultural Lens. In S. Friedman & D. Helm *End-of-Life Care for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities*. Washington, DC: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Source: Adapted from Goode & Maloof (in press)

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## **Cultural and Linguistic Competence** **From Conceptual Frameworks to Policy & Practice**

### Conduct Self-Assessment

- Assess the extent to which your organization's policies and structures take into consideration the beliefs and practices related to aging and end of life for cultural groups served.
- Assess the degree to which your academic institution and faculty contribute to the body of knowledge on cultural practices related to aging, end of life, and individuals and families impacted by developmental and other disabilities.

Source: Goode, T. & Maloof, P. (2010). End of Life through a Cultural Lens. In S. Friedman & D. Helm *End-of-Life Care for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities*. Washington, DC: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Source: Goode & Maloof (in press)

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## **Cultural and Linguistic Competence** **From Conceptual Frameworks to Policy & Practice**

### **Manage the Dynamics of Difference**

- Use existing structures or establish new ones to explore and resolve ethical dilemmas associated with aging and end-of-life decision-making and differing cultural viewpoints.
- Enlist the assistance of religious or spiritual advisors and cultural brokers in problem solving and dispute resolution.
- Attend to issues associated with literacy, health literacy, and mental health literacy of individuals, families, and communities served.

Source: Goode, T. & Maloof, P. (2010). End of Life through a Cultural Lens. In S. Friedman & D. Helm *End-of-Life Care for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities*. Washington, DC: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

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## **Cultural and Linguistic Competence** **From Conceptual Frameworks to Policy & Practice**

### **Acquire & Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge**

- Establish policies that specifically address cultural preferences related to aging and end-of-life supports. Ensure that all staff are knowledgeable and have received training in the procedures and practices to implement such policies.
- Offer forums for staff, faculty, and volunteers to:
  - share knowledge and experiences related to cultural practices, traditions, and norms associated with aging and end of life.
  - receive training, mentoring, and consultation to enhance knowledge and skills necessary to interact with and support culturally and linguistically diverse individuals and their families.

Source: Goode, T. & Maloof, P. (2010). End of Life through a Cultural Lens. In S. Friedman & D. Helm *End-of-Life Care for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities*. Washington, DC: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

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## **Cultural and Linguistic Competence** **From Conceptual Frameworks to Policy & Practice**

### **Adapt to Diversity & Cultural Contexts of Communities**

- Revisit existing policies and practices related to aging and end of life to determine if they present barriers for cultural communities served.
  
- Identify and modify policies and practices that promote cultural congruence in aging and end-of-life care and support, with the exception of those that would violate legal and regulatory requirements.

Source: Goode, T. & Malool, P. (2010). End of Life through a Cultural Lens. In S. Friedman & D. Helm *End-of-Life Care for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities*. Washington, DC: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

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**Achieving cultural  
and linguistic competence  
is a life's journey ...  
not a destination  
Safe travels!**

## CONTACT US

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## Webinar Overview and Objectives

The webinar will explore a cultural beliefs and influences that often converge when an individual is faced with end-of-life decisions within the contexts of the legal system, the health care system, community and social networks, spirituality or the faith community, and the family.

Participants will be able to:

- Define culture and describe its multiple dimensions.
- Describe examples of how cultural variables from each system may impact an individual with an intellectual or developmental disability.
- Describe how culturally competent values, policies, structures, and practices can be applied to end-of-life decision making for individuals with intellectual or developmental disability.

