

Cultural Competency



BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina and
BlueChoice® HealthPlan of South Carolina

Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

Cultural Competency

What is culture?

Culture refers to integrated patterns of human behavior including language, thoughts, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions that unite a group of people. It is used to create standards for how we act and behave socially.

What does culture mean to you, as a provider?

As a contracted health care provider with BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina and its subsidiary BlueChoice® HealthPlan, our expectation is for you and your staff to gain and continually increase your knowledge of, and ability to support, the values, beliefs and needs of diverse cultures.

This will result in effective care and services for all people by taking into account each person's values, reality conditions and linguistic needs.

Impact of Cultural Competency

Impact of Cultural Competency

Culture informs us of:

- Concepts of health and healing
- How illness, disease and their causes are perceived
- Behaviors of patients who are seeing health care
- Attitudes toward health care providers

Importance of cultural differences in health care settings.

Cultural factors may influence the way individuals define and evaluate situations, seek help for problems, present their problems to others or respond to interventions and service plans. Cultural awareness helps you modify your behaviors to respond to the needs of others while maintaining a professional level of respect and objectivity.

Impact of Cultural Competency

Reasons to increase your cultural competency awareness include:

- Understanding the perception of illnesses, diseases and their causes varies by culture and the belief systems related to health, healing and wellness are as diverse as the populations we serve
- Gaining knowledge on how culture and socioeconomic concerns influence help-seeking behaviors and attitudes toward health care providers and services and how the individual preferences affect traditional and non-traditional approaches to health care

Impact of increasing your cultural competency awareness include:

- Having a profound, positive impact on the quality of interactions with your patients by acknowledging their varied behaviors, beliefs and values and incorporating those variables into their assessments, interactions and treatments
- Understanding that each patient's ability to communicate symptoms and adhere to recommended treatments improves, in direct relation, to your ability of cultural competency and awareness

Impact of Clear Communication

Impact of Clear Communication

Barriers to communication include:

Linguistic

Speech patterns, accents or different languages may be used

Limited experience

Many people are getting health care coverage for the first time

Cultural

Each person brings their own cultural background and frame of reference to the conversation

Systematic

Health systems have specialized vocabulary and jargon

Impact of Clear Communication

Benefits of clear communication include:

Safety and adherence

Physician and patient satisfaction

Saving time and money

Preventing error reducing costs

Avoiding medical risk malpractices

Impact of Clear Communication

When using professionally trained interpreters be sure to:

- Inform the patient that using family members or minors as interpreters is highly discouraged
- Choose an interpreter who meets the needs of the patient; consider the age, sex and background
- Hold a brief introductory discussion with the interpreter, introducing yourself and giving the nature of the call
- Reassure the patient about your confidentiality practices and be sensitive to appropriate communication standards
- Be prepared to pace your discussion with the patient to allow time for interpretation and be aware that in some languages, it may take longer to explain a word or concept
- Face the patient, not the interpreter, and speak in first person and in concise sentences

Disability Sensitivity and Awareness

Disability Sensitivity and Awareness

Laws and Regulations

The *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* is divided into five titles relating to different areas of public life.

Title I	Employment practices of private employers with 15 or more employees, state and local governments, employment agencies, labor unions, agents of the employer and joint management labor committees
Title II	Programs and activities of state and local government entities
Title III	Private entities that are considered places of public accommodation
Title IV	Telecommunications
Title V	Miscellaneous

Disability Sensitivity and Awareness

Requirements for health care providers.

From the first contact a patient has with your office, the staff should be knowledgeable about not refusing services, providing separate or unequal access to health care services to individuals with disabilities and avoiding giving the appearance of discriminating against any person.

Titles II and III of the *ADA* and Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* require that medical care providers offer individuals with disabilities the following:

- Full and equal access to their health care services and facilities
- Reasonable modifications to policies, practices and procedures when necessary to make health care services fully available to individuals with disabilities unless the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the services (in other words, alter the essential nature of the services)

Disability Sensitivity and Awareness

Accessibility in health care settings.

Providing full and equal access to those with disabilities include:

- Removing physical barriers
- Providing a means for effective communication with those who have vision, hearing or speech disabilities
- Making reasonable modifications to policies, practices and procedures

Disability Sensitivity and Awareness

Accommodations for those with disabilities.

You must deliver services in a manner that accommodates the needs of members by:

- Providing flexibility in scheduling
- Providing interpreters or translators for members who are deaf, hard of hearing or speak a different language
- Having an understanding of disability-competent care
- Ensuring individuals with disabilities and their companions are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure effective communication (including auxiliary aids and services)
- Having accessible facilities
- Providing reasonable modifications/accommodations based on needs of the individual

Disability Sensitivity and Awareness

Alternate formats are required.

Under Title II of the *ADA* and Section 504, federally conducted and assisted programs along with programs of state and local government are required to make their programs accessible to those with disabilities as well as provide effective communication.

Effective communication refers to communicating with those with disabilities as effectively as you would with others.

Alternative communications that support a patient encounter include sign language interpreters, tactile interpreters and captioning and assisted-listening devices.