

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: Eliminating cultural, ethnic & racial disparities

Addressing disparities across the entire mental health system is integral to providing effective, accessible and equitable programs and services. **Local mental/behavioral health boards & commissions** should:

RECRUIT to achieve diverse membership:

Seek out and recommend qualified/diverse individuals for appointment by Board of Supervisors. (per WIC 5604(2)(A)) See “[Best Practices 2020: Recruitment](#)” for guidance.

LISTEN: for issues, gaps and successes.

- Invite organizations and individuals to your meetings that can speak to the needs of diverse communities.
- Listen to the public, treating all with dignity and respect.
- Review **CALBHB/C** “[Unconscious Bias](#)” Training.

REVIEW: Penetration rate, data, programs and planning procedures, including review of:

- Staff reports. County data is also available at: www.calbhbc.org/performance
- Plans, services and facilities to ensure they meet diverse community needs.
- Planning Process: Review and approve the procedures used to ensure citizen and professional involvement at all stages of the planning process ([5604.2\(4\)](#)), including Cultural Competency Plans and [MHSA Community Program Planning](#)
- Specific racial, ethnic, cultural and LGBTQ issue and program info at: www.calbhbc.org/cultural-issues

ADVISE the BH Director and local leadership [usually Board of Supervisors]. Recommend goals and services that meet the diverse mental/behavioral health needs of your community!

COMMENT on performance outcome data specific to culture/race/ethnicity and age to the CA Behavioral Health Planning Council.

Local & State Agency Requirements:

[3-Year Cultural Competency Plan /Annual Update Requirements](#)

[CA Law](#) requires cultural competence in all mental health services and programs at all levels. Local systems of care should:

Acknowledge and **incorporate** the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards dynamics resulting from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs.

Recognize that culture implies an integrated pattern of human behavior, including language, thoughts, beliefs, communications, actions, customs, values, and other institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups.

Promote congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies enabling the system, agencies, and mental health professionals to function effectively in cross-cultural institutions and communities.