CULTURAL COMPETENCY for a Changing World
Jewish Vocational Service

History: established in 1949 to resettle Holocaust survivors and other refugees. JVS is the refugee resettlement organization for Kansas City, MO.

MISSION: JVS strengthens the well-being of individuals, families and the community by promoting successful social, cultural and economic integration.
Immigrants, refugees, secondary migrants, Limited-English Proficient - LEP

- Latino/Hispanic
- Haitian
- Somali
- Sudanese
- Ethiopian
- Liberian
- Kenyan
- Iraqi
- Iranian
- Afghani
- Indian
- Vietnamese
- Bosnian
- Russian
Change Indicators: Johnson County

- Johnson County, 2001-2006, 170% increase in ESL/ELL enrollment.
- Shawnee Mission Schools, number of languages spoken: 68
- Olathe Schools: 55
- Blue Valley: 47

(www.ucsjoco.org-”Children & Youth Trends Report”

)
Local Demographics

- Between 1994 and 2004, the Hispanic population in 8 of the Greater Kansas City Metro area counties doubled from 52,849 to 116,562. (MARC)
- In Johnson County, one of seven persons is an ethnic minority.
- Fastest growing: Latino at 7% between 2000-2005.
Poverty on the rise: 2008

- Catholic Charities in Olathe: 81% increase in percentage of households served.
- Johnson County Multi-service Center: 60% increase in households.
From KS. Gov. Mark Parkinson:

“Contrary to popular belief, there are tens of thousands of uninsured, poor people living right here in Johnson County. They need our help.”
Cultural Competency

To be culturally competent doesn’t mean you are an authority in the values and beliefs of every culture. What it means is that you hold a deep respect for cultural differences and are eager to learn, and are willing to accept, that there are many ways of viewing the world.

- Okokon O. Udo, BD, PhD, CPCC, Ordained Prebystrian Minister
--From Cross Cultural Health Care Program
Cultural Lenses

- Personality
- Gender, race, age, sexual orientation
- Society, life experiences
- Where you live and where you grew up
- Religious affiliation
- Organizational influences – seniority within organization, level within organization, work location
- Point in history in which you were born
Finding community: The Flores Family of Mexico

- The family moved legally from Mexico to Garden City, KS.
- What changes did they encounter?
- How was work different from their own experience?
- What did they miss when they moved to Garden City?
Hispanic/Latino - General

- **Family** plays a central role. There is a huge emphasis on family as a support network and also on how decisions made will affect family members.

- Emphasis on interpersonal **relationships** and **friendships**. There is an abounding willingness to help others and to extend hospitality to all.
Hispanic/Latino - General

- Hierarchy within groups. Showing respect and seeking advice from elders/respected community members.
- “Warmer” in personal interactions (standing closer, touching, kisses)
From Obstacles -
Why are they here?

**Immigrant**
- A foreign-born individual admitted to reside permanently in the United States as a Lawful Permanent Resident.
- Economic Push/ Pull
  - Poverty
  - Loss of land
  - Loss of employer
  - Perception of better future for self, children

**Refugee**
- Any individual who has been forced to leave their home due to a well-founded fear of persecution.
- Political, Social and Environmental
  - War, political opinion, religion, race, nationality, membership to social group, famine and natural disasters.
To Opportunity -
What do they seek?

- Stability
- Tolerance
- Justice
- Health
- Food
- Clothing
- Shelter
- Education
- Employment
Special Considerations

Books to read: *The Middle of Everywhere* by Mary Pipher, author of *Reviving Ophelia*. Pipher, a psychologist, describes the experience of refugee assimilation in her Nebraska hometown of Lincoln.

*The Geography of Thought* by Richard Nisbett. This book explores how Asians and Westerners think very differently.
Educational System Differences

- U.S.: no national curriculum - transfers
- U.S.: Grading - ABCDF
- U.S.: No standard uniforms
- U.S.: Daily attendance required
- U.S. : Assigned homework
- U.S.: Lunch time, snacks, etc.
Differences, con’t:

- Non-U.S.: soccer is the main sport.
- Non-U.S.: prefer to work in groups.
- Non-U.S.: parents not as involved, teacher is the authority with permission to discipline.
- Non-U.S.: differences in diet, frequency of eating.
Family’s Rights and Privileges

- Right to know results of standardized tests.
- Right to assistance for children with disabilities.
- Right to be actively involved as a parent.
If there is a problem...

- Is it linguistic? Lack of understanding of English?
- Is it cultural? Perhaps one person doesn’t understand the cultural background of an action?
- Is it conceptual? Some concepts simply don’t exist or may be vastly different in the other culture.
What can we do to minimize obstacles?

- Be knowledgeable about the cultures you work with
- Avoid judgement based on your own cultural norms
- Be understanding of different traditions, cultures, concepts of sickness, notions of healing, etc.
Foundation of Program

Title VI of 1964 Civil Rights Act:

No person in the United States, shall, on ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Source: Title VI of 1964 Civil Rights Act and Office of Civil Rights Policy Guidance on Language Access to Services
The basic purpose of the medical/social service interpreter is to facilitate understanding and communication between two or more people who are speaking different languages.

- CCHCP, Interpreter training curriculum
Who is NOT appropriate as an Interpreter?

- Friends of any LEP individual
- Family member of LEP patient/client
- Minor children
- Anyone who has not demonstrated proficiency in both languages
- Anyone who has not received training in interpretation
- Anyone who does not have an understanding of ethics and interpreting practices
Office for Civil Rights

Maria A. Smith, Investigator
Office for Civil Rights
Federal Office Building
601 E. 12th Street, Room 248
Kansas City, MO 64106
(816) 426-7238
(800) 368-1019
Resources

- www.ucsjoco.org- "Children & Youth Trends Report")
  - Federal agency website: www.lep.gov
  - OCR/ HHS: www.hhs.gov/ocr
  - CMS: // cms.hhs.gov/ states/ letters
  - Natl Health Law Prog: www.healthlaw.org
  - National Council on Interpreting in Health Care: www.ncihc.org
  - HHS, Office of Minority Health: www.omhrc.gov/ CLAS
Contact us!

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