

# Greene County ESC Mental Health Services Cultural Competency Plan 2018

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The Greene ESC Mental Health Services is committed to being culturally competent, and demonstrating awareness, respect, sensitivity, and attention to diversity of all persons served, families/caregivers, personnel, and other stakeholders. The Greene ESC Mental Health Services recognizes that unique differences, strengths, needs, worth, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, preferences, and values reflect an individual's cognitive or physical ability, racial, ethnic, religious, economic status, gender, age, language, social groups or sexual orientation. Our commitment to cultural competency is anchored to our core values, strategic action plan, attitudes, organizational structure, policies, and services.

The Greene ESC Mental Health Services believe that culture influences people's perceptions, needs, and reactions to life events. Perceptual variations create distinct differences in realities and relate directly to the life context of staff members in interaction with the life context of persons served, therefore impacting the effectiveness of service delivery. Culture is defined as the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes the thoughts, communication, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, social, or other group. Diversity is defined as differences due to cognitive or physical ability, culture, ethnicity, religion, spiritual beliefs, economic status, gender, age, language, gender preference/expression, or sexual orientation.

The purposes of this plan is to guide how the Greene ESC Mental Health Services responds to the diversity of all stakeholders, and how knowledge, skills, and behaviors will enable personnel to work effectively in cross-cultural and diverse situations. The Greene ESC Mental Health Services strives to provide effective delivery of clinical services that recognize these various aspects and any identified special characteristics of the persons served, personnel and other stakeholders in settings that promote safety, comfort, trust, and familiarity.

Aspects of cultural competency may include: race, ethnicity, and national origin; sexual orientation or gender preference/expression; age; mental and physical abilities; disabilities of the population served; language (the ability to communicate in a manner understandable to the client); dress; traditions; notions of modesty; eye contact; health values; help-seeking behaviors; work ethics; spiritual beliefs, values and practices; holidays; dietary regulations/preferences; attitudes regarding mental health treatment; culturally-specific treatments prescribed by traditional healers, concepts of status (such as HIV or socio-economic); issues of privacy and personal boundaries; and any identified special characteristics of the persons served. Thus, this Cultural Competency Plan aims to be dynamic, flexible, and person-focused.

## **Goal**

The goal of the Greene ESC Mental Health Services Cultural Competency Plan is to ensure that everything we do as an organization is infused with awareness, respect and attention to diversity of all stakeholders, and to promote the willingness and ability of all staff members to value the importance and influence of cultural influence and diversity

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in organizational practices. The process of the ESC Mental Health Cultural Competency Plan focuses on the delivery of services and management of human resources that:

- Includes all segments of the population of persons served: individual, family, school, and community;
- Includes personnel and other stakeholders;
- Considers but is not limited to culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, socioeconomic status, and language.
- Are available, accessible, affordable, acceptable, and appropriate.

## **Objective and Scope**

ESC Mental Health Services espouses cultural competency and diversity in each organizational process, such as service delivery (e.g., consultation, advocacy, treatment planning, diagnostic assessment, transition planning), quality assurance/performance improvement, supervision, risk management, employee recruitment/retention, and leadership activities. The objective of promoting competency and valuing cultural differences includes ongoing education, awareness, and practice. Mental Health leadership, with support of the GCESC Administrative Team, shall be responsible for integration of activities that promote cultural competence within the agency.

Mental Health Services will endeavor to:

- Identify populations served outside the dominant culture;
- Educate staff members on cultural competence and diversity with regard to serving any identified population outside the dominant culture; and
- Seek feedback from persons served of any identified population outside the dominant culture regarding their perceptions of the degree of respect and understanding demonstrated for their cultural differences, needs, and preferences.

## **Implementation**

1. The Diagnostic Assessment tool will include such cultural specific items as Religion/Spirituality, Cultural/Ethnic Issues/Information/Concerns, and Gender Preference/Gender Expression/Sexual Orientation to provide information regarding specific persons served to enhance awareness and understanding on the part of staff that may have implications for treatment. Staff are trained on the DSM-5 Cultural Formulation Interview.
2. Mental Health Services will annually assess the client population compared to available statistics of the county to determine the extent to which minority populations are served by the agency. This assessment will include at least a comparative report regarding race, gender, socio-economic status and any other available information. The report will be submitted to the Quality

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Assurance/Performance Improvement Committee and shared with ESC Administration.

3. Mental Health Services will actively recruit minority ethnic and cultural representatives as staff members, interns, and volunteers. Mental Health leadership will annually assess the effectiveness of those recruitment efforts, to determine the extent to which minority populations are represented by the leadership and clinical staff members. Mental Health leadership will annually assess the effectiveness of the staff recruitment efforts, to determine the extent to which minority populations are represented by the organizational workforce.
4. Mental Health Services will identify and actively participate in community forums, planning activities, and service collaborations designed to meet the needs of underserved residents of the Greene county service area. The purpose of these interactions will be to identify the needs expressed by representatives of organizations who serve culturally diverse populations.
5. Mental Health Services will promote cultural competency and diversity awareness by providing a medium for information dissemination of available specialized trainings and seminars for all staff members. This may be through supervision, Internet offerings, email, bulletin boards, or mailings.
6. Mental Health Services will provide workshop, seminar, and education professional development reimbursement that may be used by employees for advanced cultural competency and diversity trainings. Supervisors will be responsible for promoting and approving individual access to educational opportunities that focus on clinical competence within the realm of cultural competency and diversity. "Public School Works" provides annual required training for all GCESC staff, and includes sections on disabilities, discrimination, culture, and ethics.
7. Mental Health Services will provide focused presentations and staff meetings at least annually that educate workforce members on specific aspects of cultural awareness, clinical and social implications of cultural diversity, any identified special characteristics of the clients served, and application of awareness concepts in all organizational processes.

## **Evaluation**

The effectiveness of the Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan is the responsibility of Mental Health leadership annually for review and revision as appropriate. A designated Diversity Officer will provide guidance to leadership and staff to develop and evaluate plans for cultural competency in the agency. The Diversity Officer will stay current with policy and procedural changes and ensure that the agency is adhering to the identified changes. Any issues of insensitivity can be brought to the Diversity Officer under

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confidence. The Diversity Officer will take necessary steps to investigate the issue and decide what steps, with or without committee intervention, should be taken to resolve the issue.

## **Policies and Procedures**

The Greene ESC's commitment to cultural competency and diversity is anchored to and reflected in the following policies and procedures: MHS Policies 001 through 040; GCESC Policies 3210, 5630.01, 1422, 2260, 1623, 4123, 2260, 5630.01, 2111; GCESC Administrative Guidelines: *Nondiscrimination & Equal Employment Opportunity*; *Pre-employment Interview Questions*; *Anti-harassment*; *Employee Request for Accommodations*.

**The Greene ESC Mental Health Services Diversity Officer**  
**Dr. Tim Callahan, Director of Mental Health Services**