

## **Greene County ESC Mental Health Services**

### **Cultural Competency Plan**

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Greene County Educational Service Center - Mental Health Services (GCESC-MHS) is committed to cultural humility and demonstrating awareness, respect, sensitivity, and attention to the diverse backgrounds of all persons served, families/caregivers, personnel, and other stakeholders. Our commitment to cultural humility is anchored to our mission, core values, strategic action plan, attitudes, organizational structure, policies, and services. GCESC-MHS strives to recognize, respect, and honor the unique cultural ideals, values and traditions of the persons and communities we serve.

We understand aspects of cultural humility need to recognize any intersectionality of the following: race, ethnicity, and national origin; sexual orientation or gender identity/expression; age; military status; mental and physical abilities; disabilities of the population served; language; 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; responsive to the diversity of all stakeholders, and how knowledge, skills, and behaviors will enable personnel to work more effectively in cross-cultural situations.

#### **Goal**

The goal of the GCESC-MHS 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 stand for the importance and impact of cultural influence and diversity in organizational practices. The process of this 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**

GCESC-MHS believes cultural humility and diversity should be embedded in each organizational process, such as service delivery (e.g., consultation, advocacy, treatment planning, diagnostic assessment, transition planning), Quality Assurance/Performance Improvement (QA/PI) plan and committee focus, supervision, risk management, employee recruitment/retention, and leadership activities. The objective of promoting a culturally humble environment within our agency includes ongoing education, awareness, and practice. Mental Health Leadership, with support of the Greene County Educational Service Center's (GCESC) Administrative Team, shall be responsible for integration of activities that promote cultural humility within the agency.

GCESC-MHS implementation will include:

- Identifying populations served outside the dominant culture;
- Education of staff members on cultural humility and diversity regarding serving any identified population outside the dominant culture; and
- Seeking feedback from all persons served to ensure any identified population outside the dominant culture has a voice regarding their perceptions of the degree of respect and understanding demonstrated for their cultural differences, needs, and preferences.

## **Actions**

1. Mental Health Leadership annual review and revision, if needed, of the Diagnostic Assessment tool will reflect such culturally specific items.
2. Mental Health Leadership annually review the client population in comparison to available statistics of the county population to determine the extent to which minority populations are served by the agency. This review will include comparisons regarding race, gender, socio-economic status, and any other available information.
3. Mental Health Leadership will actively seek ways to recruit minority ethnic and cultural representatives as staff members, interns, and volunteers. 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. GCESC-MHS will identify and actively engage in planned community activities and forums, as well as service collaborations designed to meet the needs of underserved residents of Greene County. The purpose of

these interactions will be to identify the needs expressed by representatives of organizations who serve culturally diverse populations and work to develop internal processes that mirror those aligned with our mission and specific to the populations we serve.

5. Mental Health Leadership will seek out experts in cultural competency to keep abreast of workshops, seminars, and professional development available. Supervisors are responsible for promoting and approving individual access to educational opportunities that focus on clinical competence within the realm of cultural competency and diversity. Staff will be provided opportunities at regular intervals to share what they have learned through these trainings with other agency staff.
6. Annual trainings through “Public School Works” are required for all GCESC-MHS and GCESC staff, and include sections on disabilities, discrimination, culture, and ethics
7. Stakeholder Feedback Surveys will be reviewed annually during the Strategic Plan review process to ensure they include opportunities for stakeholders to provide input on the extent to which services are responsive to individual needs, values, and cultural considerations of persons served.

## **Evaluation**

Measuring the effectiveness of the Cultural Competency is the responsibility of Mental Health Leadership. This plan is reviewed annually and revised as appropriate to ensure efficacy. Focused actions are integrated into the Strategic Plan. Any issues of insensitivity and exclusion can be brought to the designated cultural officer under confidence. The designated cultural officer will take necessary steps to investigate the issue and decide what steps, with or without Mental Health Leadership intervention, should be taken to resolve the issue.

## **Policies and Procedures**

GCESC-MHS's commitment to cultural humility is anchored to and reflected in all of our GCESC-MHS & GCESC policies, procedures and guidelines for practice. The following GCESC policies and procedures are specifically tied to this plan: 3210, 5630.01, 1422, 2260, 1623, 4123, 2260, 5630.01, and 2111. These GCESC Administrative Guidelines are also tied directly to this plan: Nondiscrimination & Equal Employment Opportunity; Pre-employment Interview Questions; Anti-harassment; Employee Request for Accommodations.