

**City of Portsmouth  
Department of Behavioral Healthcare Services**

**Cultural Diversity and Competency Plan  
2017 -2019**

**Overview:**

The City of Portsmouth - Department of Behavioral Healthcare Services (DBHS) continues to improve the quality of life for all staff, individuals served, families, and organizations that come into contact with our agency. We are achieving these goals by educating and training our staff members on the dynamics of our growing and culturally diverse community. Through this commitment, we will enhance our awareness, compassion, and ability to interact with others who are different than ourselves with dignity, respect, patience, and understanding.

Embracing diversity in the workplace makes for better creativity, acceptance, tolerance, and innovation. It also broadens the range of knowledge, skills, and abilities of our staff members. Better clinical decisions can be made based on culturally diverse perspectives. As an agency, our focus on cultural competency and diversity will enable us to improve our ability to provide culturally sensitive services to the individuals we serve.

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Healthcare and Developmental Services' (DBHDS) vision for culturally and linguistic competent care is:

- Care that is given with understanding of and respect for individuals' health-related beliefs and cultural values.
- Staff that respect health related beliefs, interpersonal styles, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals, families, and communities they serve.
- Administrative, management and clinical operations that include routine assessments and implementation of processes. This result in a workforce that is culturally and linguistically competent in a system that provides the highest quality of care to all communities.

DBHDS established the Office of Cultural and Linguistic Competency (CLC), in August 2008 to lead efforts to provide improved services to individuals in a multicultural setting

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and work toward eliminating the disparities within the state's mental health, intellectual disability and substance-use disorder system. The current Executive Director is a founding member of the original CLC Diversity Committee.

## **Definitions**

**Culture** – The life patterns, language and beliefs of a group of people. Culture consists of ideals, values, and assumptions about life that are widely shared among the members. It is also referred to as the behavior and values of a group of people. It is the major way in which human beings adapt to their environment and give meaning to their lives.

**Cultural Competency** –The word culture is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communication, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. Competence means that a person has the capacity to successfully function within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior as defined by the group.

## **Demographics**

DBHS provides services to the citizens of Portsmouth, Virginia; which according to the 2018 United States Census estimates, is a community of approximately 97,000 citizens, and can be described as follows:

### **Race**

- African American – 51%
- Caucasian – 48%
- Other – 2%

**Language** – Only 4.6% of Portsmouth citizens speak a language other than English at home.

**Disability** – 22% of Portsmouth citizens are identified as having a disability.

**Income** – The medium house household income is \$43,674 and is approximately 30% below the Virginia medium household income. 12.7% of families live below poverty, which is 24% higher than the United States average.

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**Religion** - There are over 300 churches in Portsmouth alone, with the top three religions being Baptist, Roman Catholic and Muslim. There is a strong Christian faith-based community in Portsmouth who is significant stakeholders of DBHS services.

**Process:**

In order to promote cultural diversity in the agency, DBHS is engaged in the following activities:

- ✓ Collaborating with other City, Faith base and Community Organizations
- ✓ Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employment initiatives for hiring under-represented populations.
- ✓ All new employees must review the DBHS Cultural Competency Plan as part of New Employee Orientation.
- ✓ We assure that a culturally diverse interview panel is available to interview all prospective employees.
- ✓ We conduct an annual assessment of demographic information on the individuals that we serve.
- ✓ Employees are provided with regular training on cultural competency from professional authorities and internal trainers and Relias, an electronic training format.
- ✓ Select employees present talks, workshops, and/or provide educational information on culturally diverse topics.
- ✓ Professional literature that relates to cultural competency and diversity is routinely distributed to employees through internet, emails and pamphlets.
- ✓ Staff participates in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of multi-cultural celebrations and faith based activities that also includes teambuilding exercises.
- ✓ Managers assure that ongoing and open discussions regarding cultural competency and diversity occur between their employees, which are documented in staff meeting minutes and/or supervision, i.e., HIV/AIDS, homeless, veterans, LBGT, sexual preference, orientation, ethnicity and race.
- ✓ Annual consumer, stakeholder, and neighboring business questionnaires are conducted to address issues of cultural diversity, competency and satisfaction.
- ✓ Placing BHS updates on city website and newsletter.
- ✓ Establish a strong Prevention Youth Coalition.

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## **Plan of Action**

As we continue to develop and improve our cultural competency and diversity plan, we make sure that the following are always incorporated: (1) assistance of professionals who have cultural expertise, (2) participation in cultural competency and diversity activities by all staff, (3) an observation and implementation process, and (4) follow-up activities that incorporate feedback and input from participants.

The goals of this cultural diversity plan is to raise the consciousness of the organization regarding culture and diversity by recognizing the need for ongoing training, dialogue, feedback, and input from all employees. It is important that all staff, new and current, are involved in the process of making DBHS a culturally aware and sensitive environment to all with whom we come into contact.

Cultural competency is the self-examination and in depth exploration of one's own cultural background. This involves the recognition of one's biases, prejudices, and assumptions about persons who are different. Without being aware of the influence of one's own cultural or professional values, there is risk that the provider may engage in cultural imposition.

As a team, we are committed to creating an environment conducive for recovery and Person Centered Treatment from behavioral health disorders for all who seek services. We affirm our commitment by making the organization a "hands on" learning experience. Not only do we seek the education of culture and diversity from professional trainings and literature, we also create activities that encourage individual research, group presentations, and culturally centered social gatherings. Through this experience, we learn a great deal about others. More importantly, we learn even more about ourselves.

Our Cultural Diversity Plan is to ensure services are provided regardless of culture, age, gender, *sexual* orientation preference, religion language, education or socioeconomic status.

We accomplished many of our 2015-2017 goals, which are noted in our Accomplishment Plans for 2015 – 2017.

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**Goal I: Continue to improve employees' awareness of services available relative to cultural awareness and competency.**

**Objective: Disseminate information and training on the following:**

- Suicide prevention
- Battered women/women in trauma, pregnant women
- Single parents;
- Co-occurring population;
- Individuals taking methadone who also have mental health disorders;
- Evidence based practices dealing with people in recovery;
- Women of color;
- Recovery and Transformation information;
- Wounded warriors and veterans;
- LGBTQ;
- Opioid Awareness;
- Wellness and Prevention;
- People of various cultures, socio-economic status, religions, linguistic, gender and sexual orientation and preference ;
- Cultural awareness/diversity and competency;
- Family and Friends Groups
- Management roles in Cultural Competency and supervision.
- Motivational Interviewing
- Working in the jails and providing services after discharge
- Gender specific groups

Action Step/Measures	Persons Responsible	Target Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increase staff cultural competency and group dynamics</li> <li>➤ Disseminate information monthly</li> <li>➤ BHS Champions to celebrate and appreciate holidays of all cultures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ M-Team</li> <li>➤ L-Team</li> <li>➤ Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ongoing</li> </ul>

**Objective: To reduce stigma regarding working with persons with HIV/AIDS, Opioid and LGBTQ to increase awareness of healthcare concerns.**

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Action Step/Measures	Persons Responsible	Target Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Facilitate cultural competency trainings and update in all staff meeting for staff annually</li> <li>➤ Develop summits and attend festivals and community activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ HIV/AIDS Coordinator</li> <li>➤ Director</li> <li>➤ Prevention staff</li> <li>➤ SA staff</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Progress Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Discuss in all staff meetings and supervision,</li> <li>➤ Follow-up with research information</li> </ul>

**Goal II: Provide HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis and other STD Education**

**Objective:** To reduce stigma regarding working with persons with HIV/AIDS and to increase awareness of healthcare concerns.

**Goal III: Provide cultural diversity training annually to build competency of staff through Relias and State in-service training**

**Objective:** Increase staff competency in working with diversity in recovery programming.

Action Step/Measures	Persons Responsible	Target Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Select staff to attend training on best practices</li> <li>➤ Have input on recovery transformation</li> <li>➤ Working with Peers in recovery</li> <li>➤ Attending city and community activities</li> <li>➤ Speaking to doctors, nurses, legislators and other stakeholders</li> <li>➤ Coordinating awareness activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ E-Team</li> <li>➤ M-Team</li> <li>➤ Director</li> <li>➤ Director</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Progress Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ L-Team and M-Team discussion</li> </ul>

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**Goal IV: Continue to maintain a workforce reflective of the DBHS clientele**

**Objective: Promote diversity in a work environment and strengthen cross-cultural collaboration.**

<b>Action Step/Measures</b>	<b>Persons Responsible</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monitor cultural competency and dynamics of workforce</li> <li>➤ Cross train staff</li> <li>➤ Provide monthly diversity calendar and information</li> <li>➤ Newsletter and awareness activities</li> <li>➤ Open door policy to explore any barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ L-Team</li> <li>➤ M-Team</li> <li>➤ Director</li> <li>➤ Prevention Staff</li> </ul>	Ongoing

**Goal V: Continue to strengthen relationships of individuals served through diverse group dynamics.**

**Objective: To continue to monitor, develop, and facilitate cultural competent groups based on needs of individuals.**

<b>Action Step/Measures</b>	<b>Persons Responsible</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monitor group interactions, notes and presenting problems;</li> <li>➤ Survey results and individual's recommendations</li> <li>➤ Clients' survey on groups</li> <li>➤ Electronic Records</li> <li>➤ EAP offer classes and training on diversity and teamwork</li> <li>➤ BHS Champions</li> <li>➤ Management Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ QMC</li> <li>➤ L-Team</li> <li>➤ Co-occurring Unit</li> <li>➤ SA/MH staff</li> <li>➤ IT Systems Manager</li> </ul>	Ongoing progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review groups and program development</li> <li>➤ Review Survey for program development</li> <li>➤ Aid managers in reviewing documentation</li> </ul>

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**Goal VI: Strengthen relationships of staff**

**Objective: Build staff morale and professional relationships.**

<b>Action Step/Measures</b>	<b>Persons Responsible</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide regular all staff meetings</li> <li>➤ Measure, monitor and survey staff</li> <li>➤ Coordinate training on various topics for all staff</li> <li>➤ Recruit members for Recovery Champions</li> <li>➤ Work with staff on Wellness for Stress Reduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Re-establish the Recovery Champions</li> <li>➤ BHS Champions</li> <li>➤ Management Team</li> </ul>	<p>2018 - 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Survey results</li> <li>➤ Staff feedback</li> <li>➤ In-house exercise</li> </ul>

**Goal VII: Conduct Improvement through communicating and assessment tools.**

**Objective: Conduct 360 communication, productivity and program improvement plans to guide program development.**

<b><u>Action Step/Measures</u></b>	<b><u>Persons Responsible</u></b>	<b><u>Target Date</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Check staff productivity weekly.</li> <li>➤ Conduct internal audits</li> <li>➤ Meet with stakeholders</li> <li>➤ Electronic Health Records allow Interaction of Co-Occurring services</li> <li>➤ Conduct performance improvement program, evaluations, suggestion boxes, stakeholder’s input, surveys, newsletters and literature in Central Intake and lobbies</li> <li>➤ Weekly management meetings to encourage managers to lead and perform as role models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ QMC</li> <li>➤ L-Team</li> <li>➤ M-Team</li> <li>➤ IT Systems Manager</li> <li>➤ QA Administrator</li> <li>➤ Managers</li> <li>➤ Director</li> </ul>	<p>2018 - 2019</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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**Goal VIII: Ensure that all individuals receive effective understandable and respectful care provided in a manner compatible with their cultural beliefs, preferred language, religion, military, sexual preferences and orientation.**

**Objective:** Services will be provided in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner.

Action Step/Measures	Persons Responsible	Target Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue to promote Person Centered Treatment</li> <li>➤ Motivational Interviewing,</li> <li>➤ Best practices of Recovery,</li> <li>➤ Programming, training/ workshops</li> <li>➤ Community Activities &amp; Awareness, Summits, and merit promotions</li> <li>➤ Review and purchase curriculums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ L-Team</li> <li>➤ Orientation</li> <li>➤ Human Rights Advocate</li> <li>➤ Director</li> <li>➤ Peer Support Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ongoing</li> </ul>

**Goal IX: Provide language or interpreter assistance when needed**

**Objective:** Provided assistance to Individuals who do not understand English so they can understand and participate fully in treatment

Action Step/Measures	Persons Responsible	Target Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop a resource guide of interpreters</li> <li>➤ Hire diverse staff who speak languages other than English and/or are certified in sign language</li> <li>➤ Develop Client Portal</li> <li>➤ Have Peers work at central Intake with Welcoming and Informational bags</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ QA Administrator</li> <li>➤ Supervisors</li> <li>➤ Personnel Analyst II</li> <li>➤ Human Resource Management</li> <li>➤ Peer Support Services</li> <li>➤ IT Staff</li> </ul>	2018-2019

## Summary

There is a great deal of work to be done and the majority of DBHS staff and stakeholders are ready and willing to engage in improving the agency's cultural and linguistic competence. We at DBHS have addressed these issues in many forums. Past and current efforts to build cultural and linguistic competency were the implementation and continuation of Person Centered Planning and Motivational Interviewing, re-establishing the Recovery Champions, Recovery Advisory Board and Suicide Prevention and Mental Health First Aid Training to staff. Working closely with the faith-based community and re-examining our mission and vision statement to allow an agency to reflect the voices of today and tomorrow. Hiring Peers and meeting clients where they are in hospitals, libraries Central Intake and Crisis Stabilization programs. .

The intent of a BHS Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan is to provide programs that creates an inclusive atmosphere that address person served with consideration and respect regardless of:

- culture,
- age,
- gender
- sexual orientation and preference,
- spiritual belief
- socioeconomic status
- language
- and education