



Definition of terms:

- **Acculturation:** Culture modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to, or borrowing traits from, another culture; a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact. It should be noted that individuals from culturally diverse groups may desire varying degrees of acculturation into the dominant culture.
- **Assimilation:** Assuming the cultural traditions of a given people or group.
- **Culture:** An integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, language, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting, roles, relationships, and expected behaviors of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group; the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations; is dynamic in nature.
- **Culture Brokering:** This term has multiple definitions. Culture brokering is defined as the act of bridging, linking, or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or reducing change (Jezewski, 1990). A culture broker acts as go-between, one who advocates on behalf of another individual or group (Jeweski & Sotnik, 2001). A health care intervention through which the professional increasingly uses cultural and health science knowledge and skills to negotiate with the client and the health care system effectively, beneficial health care plan (Wenger, 1995).
- **Cultural awareness:** Being cognizant, observant, and conscious of similarities and differences among cultural groups.
- **Cultural competence:** The NCCC embraces a conceptual framework and definition of cultural competence that requires organizations to:
 - have a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally.
 - have the capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics of difference, (4) institutionalization of cultural



- knowledge, and (5) adapt to diversity and cultural contexts of the communities they serve.
- incorporate the requirements above in all aspects of policy development, administration, and practice/service delivery and involve consumers systematically (modified from Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989).
- Cultural sensitivity: Understanding the needs and emotions of your own culture and the culture of others.
 - Ethnic: Of or relating to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background.
 - Ethnicity: The institute on Medicine (IOM), in 1999 report edited by Haynes and Smedley, defines ethnicity as how one sees oneself and how one is “seen by others as part of a group on the basis of presumed ancestry and sharing a common destiny...” Common threads that may tie one to an ethnic group include skin color, religion, language, customs, ancestry, and occupational or regional features. In addition, persons belonging to the same ethnic group share a unique history different from that of other ethnic groups. Usually a combination of these features identifies an ethnic group.
 - Linguistic competence: Linguistic competence is the capacity of an organization and its personnel to communicate effectively and to convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse audiences. Such audiences included persons of limited English proficiency, those who have low literacy skills or are not literate, and individuals with disabilities. The organization must have policy, structures, practices, procedures, and dedicated resources to support this capacity (Goode & Jones, 2003).
 - Race: There is an array of different beliefs about the definition of race and what race means within social, political, and biological contexts. The following definitions are representative of these perspectives:
 - Race is a tribe, people, or nation belonging to the same stock; a division of humankind possessing traits that are transmissible by descent and sufficient to characterize it as a distinctive human type.
 - Race is a social construct used to separate the world’s peoples. There is only one race, the human race, comprising individuals with characteristics that are more or less similar to others.



The Northwest Resource Center on CLAS and Health Disparities

A division of the Cross Cultural Health Care Program

- Evidence from the Human Genome project indicates that the genetic code for all human beings is 99.9% identical; more differences exist within groups (or races) than across groups.
- The IOM report (Haynes & Smedley, Eds., 1999) states that in all instances race is a social and cultural contrast. Specifically a “contrast of human viability based on perceived differences in biology, physical appearances, and behavior.” The IOM adds that the traditional conception of race rests on the false premise that natural distinctions grounded in significant biological and behavioral differences can be drawn between groups.

Source: Bridging the Cultural Divide in Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs. National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. Georgetown University Medical Center, Spring/Summer 2004.