




Safe Havens:
Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program

Ask-An-Expert

This segment will allow Supervised Visitation Program grantees an opportunity to interact with other grantees on problem-solving exercises and ask subject matter experts questions about topics relevant to the Supervised Visitation Program grantees and their collaborative partners.




Engaging Cultural Differences within the Context of Supervised Visitation Centers

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2



Learning Objectives

- As a result of this webinar, you will be better able to:
- Define the terms culture and cultural competency.
 - Identify ways in which culture is relevant in the every encounter within the supervised visitation context.
 - Engage in conversations around challenging cultural practices that staff may encounter when providing services.
 - Develop basic strategies that enhance the accommodation of different values and needs
 - Lay the foundation of a culturally responsive center.

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3

Cultural Identity - Question

- **When asked about your cultural identity, you define yourself along**
 - a) Race
 - b) Ethnicity
 - c) Gender
 - d) All three
 - e) None of the above

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Culture is.....Question

Culture is defined as a stable set of behaviors and shared beliefs characteristic of a particular social or ethnic group, including values, customs, beliefs, practices, traditions and behavior.

- a) Agree
- b) Disagree
- c) Not sure

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Why should we consider Culture? - Question

We should consider culture in our work, because it:

- a) Culture shapes an individual's experience.
- b) Culture shapes an individual's response to suggestions and acceptance of responsibility.
- c) Culture shapes access to other services.
- d) The culture of the advocate or professional, the system and the victim will impact outcome.
- e) All of the above

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Definition Of Culture

- A critical definition of culture refers to shared experiences or commonalities that have developed and continue to evolve in relation to changing social and political contexts, based on:

- race
- ethnicity
- national origin
- sexuality
- gender
- religion
- age
- class
- disability status
- immigration status
- education
- geographic location (space)
 - rural, urban,
- time, or
- other axes of identification
 - within the historical context of oppression

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7

Working Assumptions

CULTURALLY COMPETENT ASSUMPTIONS:

- All cultures are contradictory - values can be both oppressive and nurturing at the same time.
- Each victim is not only a member of her/his community, but a unique individual with their own responses. The complexity of a person's response is shaped by multiple factors.
- Each individual comes into any encounter with cultural experiences and perspectives that might differ from those present in the system.
- All institutions have to develop specific policies and procedures to systematically build cultural competence.

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8

Maria, Felipe and their children

- Maria is a 26 year old Catholic woman from Guatemala who came to the US via Chiapas and Mexico. She has been married to Felipe for 11 years and has four children – Consuela (10), Dolores (8), Carlos (4) and Miguel (2).
- Maria has been battered by Felipe as long as she has known him. She works two jobs and was not allowed to learn English but Maria has been able to pick up the language.

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9

Maria, Felipe and their children

- After Felipe's arrest on misdemeanor domestic violence charges, Maria fled to a domestic violence shelter. She also obtained an order of protection that gave her temporary custody of the children and Felipe visitation at the center – every Friday from 6:00 – 8:30pm.
- Felipe is punctual and interacts well with the younger children most of the time – he plays with them, laughs and cuddles with them.

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10

Maria, Felipe and their children

- At times, he comes in and ignores all the children.
- He is also affectionate towards Dolores – he puts her on his lap, strokes her
- He ignores Consuela, asks her numerous questions about her new school, her doctor and where they live. Consuela is irritable with Felipe and sometimes openly hostile with him.
- Felipe wants to know if he can bring presents for his three children.
 - Do you allow him to bring presents?
 - If no, why?

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11

Maria, Felipe and their children

- On two visits, you notice the following –
 - He lets the two younger children run around the place, jump on the sofa, throw toys around
 - He yells at Consuela that she should be disciplining the children and is turning out to be as useless as her mother and will make a really bad “Latina” wife

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12

Maria, Felipe and their children

- When you remind Felipe of the rules, he tells you that Maria is raising the children badly and that Consuela is unfit as a girl and that boys have to be rambunctious since this is what their culture is like.

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Maria, Felipe and their children

- How would you deal with Felipe, Maria and the children?
- How would you handle the issue of practices being part of their culture?

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Cultural Competency

- Is a life long process
- Requires visiting rules, regulations, atmosphere of center, services, policies, procedures, and staff concerns on a regular basis
- Requires reflective supervision of staff
- Ongoing critical conversations

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Cultural Competency Begins With:

- **Being aware of one's biases, prejudices and knowledge about a person. For example,**
 - Challenge your assumptions.
 - Use appropriate language.
 - Be aware of assumptions of family.
 - Do not assume people have resources
- **Recognizing professional power and avoiding the imposition of those values. For example,**
 - Use non-judgmental questions
- **Listen to the person. For example,**
 - Let them narrate their story.

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CULTURAL COMPETENCY BEGINS WITH:

- **Gathering information about the person's interpretation of their culture. For example in assessment:**
 - "what is it like for you to talk about this problem in your community?"
- **Validating the person's strengths. For example in intervention:**
 - thank them for sharing and acknowledge existing support systems.

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CULTURAL COMPETENCY BEGINS WITH:

- **Developing linkages with the community. For example,**
 - Give culturally appropriate referrals.
 - Work with community based agencies.
- **Negotiating the acceptance of a different set of values. For example,**
 - Remember, it takes time for people to accept new systems and ideas.
 - Patience is the key.

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Thank You For Attending

Thank you for attending today's segment. For more information, or to inquire about training or technical assistance, please visit safehavenonline.org or contact Michele Robinson, Program Manager with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges at mrobinson@ncjfcj.org or (775) 784-6427.

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