SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE TO CULTURAL SAFETY

What: Organizations search for innovative ways to deliver services that are responsive to cultural diversity in Canada, Ontario, and Simcoe County. In response to these needs, the Child Youth and Family Services Coalition of Simcoe County has developed a Cultural Competency Self-Assessment tool for its members. This tool is designed to support Coalition member organizations to better understand cultural competency and safety, reflect upon their structures, policies and procedures, plan and implement culturally competent practices.

When: Board members and staff at all levels must be supported with both knowledge and skill-based training. Organizations that engage in the process of moving along the cultural competency continuum towards cultural safety need to view themselves as learning institutions. They need to accept and expect ambiguity, try new things, ask questions, revise assumptions and take risks.

Where: Cultural safety refers to a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that enables organizations to work effectively with various racial, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. It is compatible with the fundamental principles of respect, equality, diversity and inclusion that Canada has long embraced. As Canadian society continues to transform into a tapestry of colors, customs, languages, accents, beliefs, values and talents, organizations need to view cultural competency and safety not as an add-on option, but rather as an integrated core business requirement for effective practices.

Why: This self-assessment tool examines cultural competency at the organizational level. The process will allow you to identify where your organization is on the Cultural Continuum and propose an introspection towards the next phases. However, it recognizes the important interplay between individual cross-cultural proficiency and organizational competency. Culturally competent organizations are composed of culturally competent individuals. This tool also advocates that cultural competency is an important learned skill set that is relevant to all service providers, regardless of their cultural backgrounds or practice settings.

How: A preliminary tool is proposed on page 3 of this document. Meant to be examined at Board level, its purpose is to define the level of Cultural Competency readiness within your organization. It is by far complete, nor exhaustive, but a great indicator of the level of preparedness and openness of your organization toward the reality of the rapidly changing Canadian Communities.

Guiding Principles:
- Self-assessment is an internally managed process that requires voluntary participation, time, energy and commitment from board members and staff at all levels, as well as the courage to reflect upon existing individual and organizational behaviors.
- Self-assessment itself is one-step in the complex process in an elaborated organizational transformation change efforts. The self-assessment tools, therefore, need to be used within the context of the larger process towards cultural competency outlined in the complementary pages.
- Self-assessment is only as beneficial to organizations willing and able to use the results as springboards to take further action. An initial assessment provides the benchmark necessary to evaluate change and improvement.
- People from diverse gender, racial, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, age, and linguistic backgrounds should be involved in all aspects of the cultural competency process, including assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation and celebration.

The Cultural Safety Continuum

The Cultural Safety Continuum[1] was developed in 2002 by Irihapeti Ramsden, a Maori nurse and educator in her doctoral thesis. Cultural safety as depicted on the culture continuum is one of the most advanced concepts in terms of practical relevance to the design and delivery of government and institutional policy. The concept entails not just the agreement and understanding that cultural differences matter in social and health policy delivery, but also the need to make a real difference in methods of delivery and the ultimate effectiveness of the policies. Cultural safety is not just a process of improving program delivery; it is also part of the outcome.

Cultural
Safety

Cultural
Competency

Cultural
Sensitivity

Cultural
Awareness

Cultural
Blindness
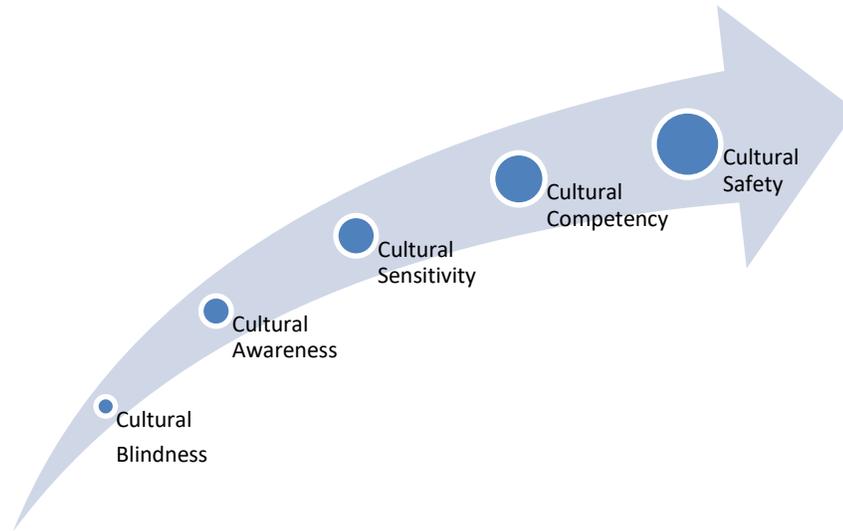
Where are you on the Continuum[2]?

Cultural Blindness: *The inability to see beyond ones' own experience.* Characterised by the belief that service or helping approaches traditionally used by the dominant culture are universally applicable regardless of race or culture. These services ignore cultural strengths and encourage assimilation.

Cultural Awareness: *Understanding that others may have different experiences.* The acknowledgment of difference. It is the first step in understanding cultural differences and involves observing those differences. Cultural awareness focuses on "other" and the "other culture". Cultural awareness does not require an organization to reflect on its own cultural perspective, system or policies.

Cultural Sensitivity: *Understanding that one's experiences affect how they relate to the world*. Characterised by the desire to deliver quality services and committed to diversity. Demonstrated by hiring minority staff and recruiting minority members for agency leadership. However, this level of competence can lead to tokenism.

Cultural Competency: *Allowing another's experience to lead organizational change/improvements.* Characterised by acceptance and respect for difference, continuing self-assessment, and careful attention to the dynamics of difference, continuous expansion of knowledge and resources and adaptation of services to better meet the needs of diverse populations.

Cultural Safety: *Creating an environment where everyone's experiences are equally valued.* Characterised by holding culture in high esteem. Seeking to add to the knowledge base of culturally competent practice by conducting research, influencing approaches to care, and improving relations between cultures. Promoting self-determination.
Note: This process is an ever-changing one, always in evolution as time, culture and standards evolve in a continued fashion. Organizations must reflect, adapt to ensure they remain in the cultural safety zone and keep openness channels to understand required changes and challenges. **You are now ready to take the assessment!**

Child Youth and Family Services Coalition of Simcoe County - Self-Assessment Tool

Description – Place an **X** in <u>one</u> of the appropriate columns for each of the following statements.	Does not meet Criteria	Meets Criteria	Exceeds in all areas	Comments:
CRITERIA 1: Administration				
1. The organization has a definition of cultural competency.				
2. The organization identifies how they will work to achieve cultural competency.				
3. Where a Board of Directors exists, the Board of Directors reflects/ represents the diversity of the population.				
4. The strategic plan of the Organization commits to the delivery of culturally competent services.				
5. Does the organization present promotional material that reflects the diversity of the community served (brochures, web site, images, and communications).				
6. The organization has ways to receive feedback about cultural competent services.				
7. Your organization has created a diversity and equity committee.				
8. The organization has written policies and procedures that address discrimination.				
CRITERIA 2: Human Resources				
9. The Board members understand the many levels of legislations and regulations required to achieve cultural competency.				
10. The decision process on programs is supported by regional demographic data.				
11. The organization has a human resources strategy to recruit staff (peers) who can meet the cultural needs of the population served.				
12. The organization has an annual education and training plan in cultural competency.				
13. Opportunities for diversity training are supported and encouraged.				
CRITERIA 3: Service delivery				
14. Intake and Admissions process interviews children, youth and families in a manner that recognizes cultural context, in official languages and non-official mother tongues if necessary.				
15. The services are provided in the cultural context of the children and youth/family served.				
16. The organization acknowledges diverse perspectives of children and youth/families				
17. The organization incorporates diversity perspectives into all programs and services.				
18. The organization uses current data sources to identify vulnerable residents and communities lacking access to services.				
19. An outreach program is in place to communicate services to vulnerable communities.				
20. Organization plans for and sets aside funding to support interpretation and translation needs for non-official languages spoken by clients.				

Results of self-assessment				
Number of answers in the first column, multiplied by 1. _____ x 1 =				
Number of answers in the second column, multiplied by 2. _____ x 2 =				
Number of answers in the third column, multiplied by 3. _____ x 3 =				
Self-assessment total results Add the results of the 3 columns				

Scoring system:

From 1 to 20 - 	**Cultural Blindness Zone**: There is lots to be considered to achieve Cultural Competency. Reflect and prepare your plan!

From 21 to 40 - 	**Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Zone**: Much work needs to be completed but your organization is on the right path. Keep it alive!

From 41 to 60 - 	**Cultural Competency and Safety Zone**: Your organization is doing outstanding in the field of Cultural Competency. Share with others!

Upon completion of this self-assessment, should your organization require additional information or training, contact the Coalition Members Relations Officer: Stefanie Smith at: stefanie.smith@mackenziehealth.ca

Your suggestions and comments to improve this tool are more than welcome.

Thank you for your participation and support.

(1) Cultural Safety – Reference document link
(2) Adapted from a paper by Terry Cross, "Through Indigenous Eyes: Rethinking Theory and Practice", at 2007 SNAICC Conference, Adelaide