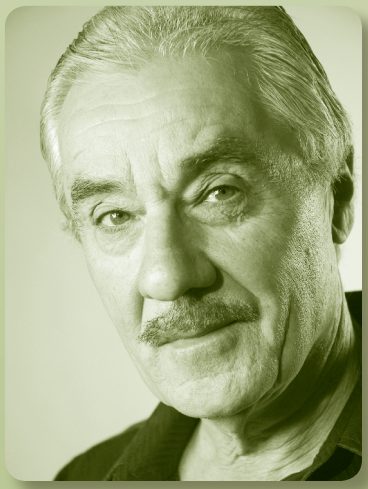
CHAPTER 3 Developing Cultural Competence



CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates

CHAPTER 3

Developing Cultural Competence

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CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates

CHAPTER 3

Developing Cultural Competence

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

GETTING IN GEAR

RESOURCE MATERIALS EXPLORATION

Look at the Chapter 3 Web Resources or the Chapter 3 Resource Materials. Pick at least one website or article to explore, and bring back what you learn to share with the group, the facilitator, and your local CASA/GAL program. When you come to this training session, write up a brief description of the resource on an index card provided by the facilitator.

CULTURAL EXPLORATION

Prior to beginning work on this chapter, read the articles about cultural competence issues assigned and provided by the facilitator. The facilitator will let you know which cultural groups in your community you should be familiar with as a GASA/GAL volunteer. As you read the articles, note any questions or ideas you have for working with people from different cultures. These articles do not necessarily represent the viewpoint of the National CASA Association or your local CASA/GAL program. Please recognize that no single article about a cultural group can adequately describe one person or one family. These articles are designed to provide an introduction to the many cultures and perspectives represented in your communities. In order to gain a broader understanding of a particular cultural group, consider doing research on your own.

GOAL

In this chapter, I will become familiar with some of the current thinking regarding cultural competence, diversity, and the adverse effects of bias and discrimination. I will better understand my cultural influences and personal biases, and I will strive to increase my cultural competence and sensitivity in my work as a CASA/GAL volunteer.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, I will be able to . . .

- ✓ Recognize that there are many facets of diversity and develop a working vocabulary related to diversity issues
- ✓ Explain how diversity and cultural competence among CASA/GAL volunteers benefit children and families
- ✓ Explore my identity and my culture's effects on my values, attitudes, and behaviors
- ✓ Recognize how becoming culturally competent can help me to avoid stereotyping
- ✓ Explore the causes and effects of disproportionality in the juvenile court and foster care systems
- ✓ Identify and apply culturally competent practices in my work with children and families
- ✓ Identify community resources that will increase my understanding and appreciation of diversity
- ✓ Determine the steps I can take to increase my cultural competency and to demonstrate the high value I place on culturally competent child advocacy
- ✓ Recognize that becoming culturally competent is a lifelong process

UNIT 1

Diversity

As a general term "diversity" refers to difference or variety. In the context of CASA/GAL volunteer work "diversity" refers to differences or variety in people's identities or experiences: ethnicity, race, national origin, language, gender, religion, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, and so on. The term "cultural competence" refers to the ability to work effectively with people from a broad range of backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints.

The United States is becoming increasingly multicultural. According to the 2000 US Census, approximately 30% of the population currently belongs to a racial or ethnic minority group. The Census Bureau projects that by the year 2100, non-Hispanic whites will make up only 40% of the US population. The facilitator will tell you about the demographics in your state and local area. As you work through this chapter, keep in mind the particular cultural groups with whom you will work as a CASA/GAL volunteer.

Understanding issues related to diversity and culturally competent child advocacy is critical to your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer. It can enhance your ability to see things from new and different perspectives and to respond to each child's unique needs. Developing cultural competence is a lifelong process. This chapter offers a starting point for understanding key issues, and the case studies and examples throughout this manual encourage continued exploration.

Activity 3A: Cultural Pursuit

Follow the directions for Cultural Pursuit, which the facilitator will provide as a handout. When one of you has found the answers for 20 of the 25 squares, come back to the large group and share your experiences. The facilitator will share the answer key.

Individually, consider the following questions:

- Were there any surprises about who initialed the various boxes?
- Did you make any assumptions about who might be able to initial a particular box?
- Were you surprised by the amount of "cultural knowledge" that exists in this particular group?

Share your observations with the group.

Cultural Pursuit

Read the following chart and initial any boxes that describe you. Next, ask others to initial remaining boxes that describe them. Be prepared to share in the large group what you know and any new information that you discover.

Cultural Pursuit

Has had her/ his name mispronounced	Knows what *Nisei* means	Is from a mixed-heritage background	Is bilingual/ multilingual	Has been misunderstood by a person from a different culture
Has a parent or grandparent who was not born in the United States	Has had to overcome physical barriers in life	Has experienced being stereotyped	Knows what Rosa Parks did	Has an *abuela*
Can name the West Coast equivalent to Ellis Island	Knows what an upside-down pink triangle symbolizes	Listens to salsa music	Has traced his/her family lineage or heritage	Knows who Harvey Milk was
Knows how many federally recognized Native American tribes are in the US	Knows what Kwanzaa is	Knows the significance of eagle feathers	Knows why the Irish immigrated to the United States in the 1840s	Knows the color of a parking zone for disabled people
Can name the lawyer who argued for the petitioner in *Brown v. Board of Education*	Knows the meaning of "mensch"	Knows what "comparable worth" means	Has seen a step show	Knows what *lumpia* is

Activity 3B: The Value of Diversity

Read the excerpt, "Our Vision," from National CASA's philosophy statement. Then read the signs posted around the room that list the principles that guide National CASA's efforts and goals related to achieving diversity within the CASA/GAL network.

In the large group, the facilitator will ask a few of you to share briefly which principle you think is most important and why, and will then address your questions or observations about the vision statement or any of the principles.

Our Vision

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association "stands up" for abused and neglected children.

Building on our legacy of quality advocacy, we acknowledge the need to understand, respect, and celebrate diversity including race, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and the presence of a sensory, mental, or physical disability. We also value diversity of viewpoints, life experiences, talents, and ideas.

A diverse CASA/GAL network helps us to better understand and promote the well-being of the children we serve. Embracing diversity makes us better advocates by providing fresh ideas and perspectives for problem solving in our multicultural world, enabling us to respond to each child's unique needs.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ACHIEVING A DIVERSE CASA/GAL NETWORK

1. Ethnic and cultural background influences an individual's attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors.
2. Each family's characteristics reflect adaptations to its primary culture and the majority culture, the family's unique environment, and the composite of the people and needs within it.
3. A child can be best served by a CASA/GAL volunteer who is culturally competent and who has personal experience and work experience in the child's own culture(s).
4. To understand a child, a person should understand cultural differences and the impact they have on family dynamics.
5. No cultural group is homogenous; within every group there is great diversity.
6. Families have similarities yet are all unique.
7. In order to be culturally sensitive to another person or group, it is necessary to evaluate how each person's culture impacts his/her behavior.
8. As a person learns about the characteristic traits of another cultural group, he/she should remember to view each person as an individual.
9. Most people like to feel that they have compassion for others and that there are new things they can learn.
10. Value judgments should not be made about another person's culture.
11. It is in the best interest of children to have volunteers who reflect the characteristics (i.e., ethnicity, national origin, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, and socioeconomic status) of the population served.

Cultural Diversity Vocabulary

Developing a working vocabulary related to issues of diversity can help you communicate more effectively with other people and examine where you have more to learn.

Ableism	Discrimination or prejudice based on a limitation, difference, or impairment in physical, mental, or sensory capacity or ability
Ageism	Discrimination or prejudice based on age, particularly aimed at the elderly
Bias	A personal judgment, especially one that is unreasoned or unfair
Biracial	Of two races; usually describing a person having parents of different races
Classism	Discrimination or prejudice based on socioeconomic status
Cultural Dominance	The pervasiveness of one set of traditions, norms, customs, literature, art, and institutions, to the exclusion of all others
Cultural Competence	The ability to work effectively with people from a variety of cultures, ethnicities, races, religions, classes, sexual orientations, and genders
Cultural Group	A group of people who consciously or unconsciously share identifiable values, norms, symbols, and some ways of living that are repeated and transmitted from one generation to another
Cultural Sensitivity	An awareness of the nuances of one's own and other cultures
Culturally Appropriate	Demonstrating both sensitivity to cultural differences and similarities and effectiveness in communicating a message within and across cultures
Culture	The shared values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, folklore, and institutions of a group of people who are unified by race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, and/or religion
Disability	A limitation, difference, or impairment in a person's physical, mental, or sensory capacity or ability. Many communities prefer the term "differently abled" over "disabled."
Discrimination	An act of prejudice or a manner of treating individuals differently due to their appearance, status, or membership in a particular group
Disproportionality	Overrepresentation or underrepresentation of various groups in different social, political, or economic institutions
Dominant Group/ Culture	The "mainstream" culture in a society, consisting of the people who hold the power and influence
Ethnicity	The classification of a group of people who share common characteristics, such as language, race, tribe, or national origin
Ethnocentrism	The attitude that one's own cultural group is superior
Gender	A social or cultural category generally assigned based on a person's biological sex
Gender Identity	A person's sense of being masculine, feminine, or some combination thereof
Heterosexism	An ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any nonheterosexual form of behavior, identity, or relationship
Homophobia	Fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality, homosexuals, or same-sex relationships

Cultural Diversity Vocabulary

Institutional Racism	Biased policies and practices within an organization or system that disadvantage people of a certain race or ethnicity
Language	The form or pattern of communication—spoken, written, or signed—used by residents or descendants of a particular nation or geographic area or by any body of people. Language can be formal or informal and includes dialect, idiomatic speech, and slang.
Minority	The smaller in number of at least two groups. Can imply a lesser status or influence and can be seen as an antonym for the words "majority" and "dominant."
Multicultural	Designed for or pertaining to two or more distinct cultures
Multiracial	Describing a person, community, organization, etc., composed of many races
National Origin	The country or region where a person was born
Person of Color	Usually used to define a person who is not a descendant of people from European countries. Individuals can choose whether or not to self-identify as a person of color.
Prejudice	Overgeneralized, oversimplified, or exaggerated beliefs associated with a category or group of people, which are not changed even in the face of contrary evidence
Race	A socially defined population characterized by distinguishable physical characteristics, usually skin color
Racism	The belief that some racial groups are inherently superior or inferior to others; discrimination, prejudice, or a system of advantage and/or oppression based on race
Sexism	Discrimination or prejudice based on gender or gender identity
Sexual Orientation	Describes the gender(s) of people to whom a person feels romantically and/or sexually attracted: *Heterosexual:* Attracted to the other gender *Homosexual:* Attracted to the same gender (i.e., gay or lesbian) *Bisexual:* Attracted to either gender
Socioeconomic Status	Individuals' economic class (e.g., poor, working-class, middle-class, wealthy) or position in society based on their financial situation or background
Stereotype	A highly simplified conception or belief about a person, place, or thing, based on limited information
Transgender	Describes a person whose gender identity differs from his/her assigned gender and/or biological sex
Transsexual	A person whose gender identity differs from his/her assigned gender and/or biological sex. Many transsexuals alter their biological sex through hormones and/or surgery.
Values	What a person believes to be important and accepts as an integral part of who he/she is
Xenophobia	A fear of all that is foreign, or a fear of people believed to be "foreigners"

Most people are knowledgeable and open about some aspects of their culture. About other aspects, they may have either less information or a heightened sense of privacy. In some matters they might fear judgment or discrimination. People from the dominant culture may not recognize their own values, behaviors, or traditions as cultural at all—they may think of them simply as "normal."

As a foundation for expanding your understanding of other cultures, it is important to be thoroughly acquainted with your own. Cultural competence begins with understanding and appreciating your own identity. You are a "culturally rich" individual with your own blend of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, religion or spirituality, geographic location, and physical and mental abilities.

Activity 3C: What's in a Name?

Names are an important element of identity. Perhaps your first or last name has family or cultural significance, or maybe you have changed your name to better reflect who you are. In pairs, tell each other about your name. You may want to include:

- Who gave you your name? Why?
- What is the ethnic origin or meaning of your name? Does your name have cultural significance?
- Is the ethnic origin of your name different from the ethnic origin with which you identify or the ethnic group of which you are a member?
- Do you have more than one ethnic origin?
- Do you have a nickname? Have you taken a name different from the one you were given at birth?

Share highlights from your stories in the large group.

Activity 3D: Exploring Your Culture & Perceptions

Part 1: In new pairs, choose three of the categories from the list below. Think about your culture and life experiences, and describe yourself, your family of origin, or your current family situation to your partner.

After you've shared, reflect individually on the following questions:

- How did you choose the three categories you shared? Are there categories that you would have been uncomfortable sharing in this group?
- What contributes to your feelings of safety when you are asked to disclose personal information?

- **Race**
- **Family Form** (single parent, married with no children, etc.)
- **Ethnicity** (cultural description or country of origin)
- **Gender**
- **Geographic Identity** (rural or urban; in the US, eastern, western, midwestern, etc.)
- **Age**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Religion or Spirituality**
- **Language**
- **Disabilities**
- **Socioeconomic Status** (low-income, working-class, middle-class, wealthy)

Part 2: In your same pairs, now imagine that you are the parent of a child just placed in foster care and you are describing yourself to someone who has power over your life—for instance, the caseworker, the judge, or an attorney. When you describe yourself to this person, what might you leave out or try to make fit what you think might be more acceptable to them? If you often had to do this, what do you think would happen to these parts of yourself?

Share your experiences in the large group.

Part 3: As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you will have influence in the lives of the children and families in your cases. In the large group, discuss the following questions:

- How might your position as a CASA/GAL volunteer affect your ability to establish rapport, communicate effectively, and gather accurate information?
- How do your personal values impact your ability to be unbiased?

Exploring the meaning and place of values in your work on behalf of children can assist you in seeing the range of values that people hold and the variety of reasons people have for their beliefs. It also increases your understanding that people can hold values very different from yours and be equally thoughtful and caring in their reasoning. Even when individuals appear to have similar values, they may actually have very different perspectives and reasons for having them.

Your work as a CASA/GAL volunteer cannot be free of values. You model your own and your community's values every day through your actions (and inaction). Almost all interactions transmit values in some way—for instance, through how you dress, move, relate to others, and communicate. As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you need to examine how values may affect your interactions with the children and families with whom you work. You need to acknowledge the plurality of values in your community and demonstrate respect for this diversity.

There are essentially two types of values: those that are universal and those that are not. Universal values are shared by an overwhelming majority of the community. Laws are often related to these values, but they are not the same things. The following exercise is an opportunity to explore your values and how they are similar to or different from the values of others.

Activity 3E: Recognizing Your Values

Part 1: Complete the Values Statement Exercise. Do not put your name on the sheet. This is an anonymous/confidential activity. After completing this form, give it to the facilitator, who will redistribute all the forms as part of an activity to clarify values and build empathy.

When you receive a completed Values Statement Exercise, do not identify whether you received your form or someone else's. Spend a moment, alone, noticing if the answers in front of you are similar to or different from yours.

Part 2: Around the room are posted signs representing four possible responses to the values statements: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. As the facilitator reads each statement, go to the sign that represents the answer on the sheet you have been given. With others in the group at your sign, think of the three most rational or respectful reasons a person might hold this belief. It may be especially difficult to come up with respectful reasons a person might hold a belief that is very different from your own, but remember that someone else in the room holds this belief. Show respect. This activity is an opportunity to walk in someone else's shoes, and perhaps gain insight into why people have beliefs that differ from your own.

As a group, share your three best reasons with the large group using the following format: "I believe *[read the statement]* because *[give your three best reasons]*."

After going through all 14 statements, share any remaining concerns or questions in the large group.

Values Statement Exercise

1. I believe there should be a 10 p.m. curfew for all children 16 years of age and under.

   strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

2. I believe every child should be able to sleep in his/her own bed.

   strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

3. I believe a safe home is a happy home.

   strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

4. I believe the judicial system is unfair to people of color.

   strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

5. I believe a gay or lesbian couple should be able to adopt children.

   strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

6. I believe that interracial adoption is wrong.

   strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

7. I believe a family that prays together stays together.

   strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

8. I believe a parent's use of corporal punishment reflects his/her inability to communicate with children.

   strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

9. I believe that mothers who stay in abusive relationships are guilty of child abuse.

   strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

10. I believe people who use or abuse drugs should be incarcerated.

    strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

11. I believe that people on welfare are generally lazy.

    strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

12. I believe teen parents cannot do an adequate job.

    strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

13. I believe drinking alcohol during pregnancy is child abuse.

    strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

14. I believe that all children deserve safe and permanent homes.

    strongly disagree | disagree | agree | strongly agree

UNIT 4

Culturally Competent Child Advocacy

In the context of the CASA/GAL volunteer role, cultural competence is the ability to work effectively with people from a variety of backgrounds. It entails being aware and respectful of the cultural norms, values, traditions, and parenting styles of those with whom you work. Striving to be culturally competent means cultivating an open mind and new skills and meeting people where they are, rather than making them conform to your standards.

Each child and each family is made up of a combination of cultural, familial, and personal traits. In working with families, you need to learn about an individual's or family's culture. When in doubt, ask the people you are working with. It might feel awkward at first, but learning how to ask questions respectfully is a vital skill to develop as you grow in cultural competence. Once people understand that you sincerely want to learn and be respectful, they are usually very generous with their help.

Developing cultural competence is a lifelong process through which you'll make some mistakes, get to know some wonderful people in deeper ways, and become a more effective CASA/GAL volunteer.

LEARN MORE!

For additional reading on different cultural groups and tips on becoming more culturally competent, see the Chapter 3 Resource Materials.

Activity 3F: Expanding Your Cultural Knowledge—Homework Review

For homework, you read some articles that shared information and insights about the experiences and cultures of several different cultural groups, including those that are a part of your local community. Remember that these articles contain generalizations and cannot adequately describe any one person, family, or cultural group. Think about how difficult it might be to decide what to include and what to leave out if you were writing an article about your own cultural group.

In your small groups, answer the following questions:

- What did you find surprising or interesting in your reading?
- What did you learn that will help you in your role as a CASA/GAL volunteer?

Share highlights from your discussion in the large group.

Activity 3G: Stereotyping vs. Cultural Competence

Part 1: In your small group, discuss the following:

- Identify examples in the media where you have seen a community or culture stereotyped.
- Share an experience in which you were stereotyped or misunderstood by a person from another culture.

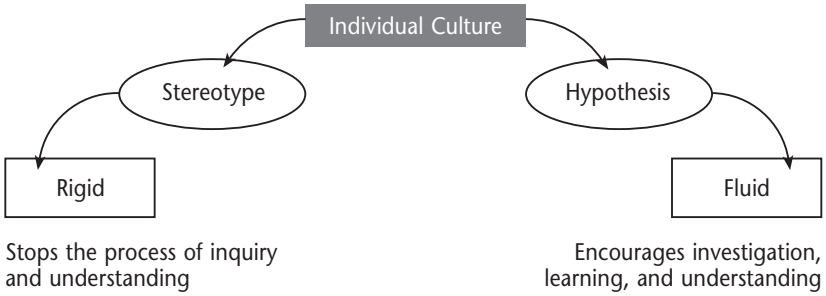
Part 2: Read the material below about stereotyping. In the large group, identify how stereotyping might affect your ability to be an effective advocate for a child.

Stereotyping vs. Cultural Competence

Stereotypes are rigid and inflexible. Stereotypes hold even when a person is presented with evidence contrary to the stereotype. Stereotypes are harmful because they limit people's potential, perpetuate myths, and are gross generalizations about a particular group. For instance, a person might believe that people who wear large, baggy clothes shoplift. Teenagers wear large, baggy jackets; therefore, teenagers shoplift. Such stereotypes can adversely affect your interactions with children and others in your community. Even stereotypes that include "positive" elements (e.g., "they" are quite industrious) can be harmful because the stereotypes are rigid, limiting, and generalized.

Unlike stereotyping, cultural competence can be compared to making an educated hypothesis. An educated hypothesis contains what you understand about cultural norms and the social, political, and historical experiences of the children and families with whom you work. You might hypothesize, for example, that a Jewish family is not available for a meeting on Yom Kippur, or that they would not want to eat pork. However, you recognize and allow for individual differences in the expression and experience of a culture; for instance, some Jewish people eat pork and still are closely tied to their Jewish faith or heritage. Another example might be that some African American families celebrate Kwanzaa, while others do not.

As an advocate, you need to examine your biases and recognize they are based on your own life and do not usually reflect what is true for the stereotyped groups. Everyone has certain biases. Everyone stereotypes from time to time. Developing cultural competence is an ongoing process of recognizing and overcoming these biases by thinking flexibly and finding sources of information about those who are different from you.



Activity 3H: Disproportionality in Child Advocacy

Disproportionality is the experience of overrepresentation or underrepresentation of various groups in different social, political, or economic institutions. For example, women in the United States are overrepresented as single heads of household, and African Americans and Latinos are overrepresented in the US prison population.

Listen as the facilitator highlights some facts about racial imbalances that exist nationally in the juvenile court and foster care systems. The facilitator will also share with you state or local statistics that demonstrate whether/how disproportionality is an issue in your area.

In the large group, answer the following questions:

- What do you think causes disproportionality in the child welfare system?
- How might stereotyping or bias result in disproportionality?
- How can culturally competent child advocacy help eliminate disproportionality in the system?

- There is no difference between races in the likelihood that a parent will abuse or neglect a child, but there is a great difference between races in the likelihood that a child will be removed from home and placed in foster care. Compared to white children, African American children are four times more likely to be placed in care, American Indian and Native Alaskan children are three times more likely, and Hispanic children are twice as likely.

  Casey Family Programs, www.casey.org.

- Children of color make up almost two-thirds of the 540,000 children in the foster care system, although they constitute just over one-third of the child population in the US.

  W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Families for Kids Project, www.wkkf.org.

- The number of white children entering foster care in a given year is greater than the number of African American children. Yet, African American children make up a disproportionate, and increasing, share of those who remain.

  Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data.

- The percentage of Hispanic children in foster care more than doubled from 7% in 1982 to 17% in 2002.

  Families for Kids Project and AFCARS data.

- Children of color experience a higher number of placements than white children, and they are less likely to be reunified with their birth families.

  Casey Family Programs, www.casey.org.

LEARN MORE!

For more information about children in foster care in your state, check out the Child Welfare League of America's National Data Analysis System at *http://ndas.cwla.org*.

10 Benefits of Practicing Culturally Competent Child Advocacy

1. Ensures that case issues are viewed from the cultural perspective of the child and/or family:
   - Takes into account cultural norms, practices, traditions, intrafamilial relationships, roles, kinship ties, and other culturally appropriate values
   - Advocates for demonstrated sensitivity to this cultural perspective on the part of caseworkers, service providers, caregivers, or others involved with the child and family
2. Ensures that the child's long-term needs are viewed from a culturally appropriate perspective:
   - Takes into account the child's need to develop and maintain a positive self-image and cultural heritage
   - Takes into account the child's need to positively identify and interact with others from his/her cultural background
3. Prevents cultural practices from being mistaken for child maltreatment or family dysfunction
4. Assists with identifying when parents are truly not complying with a court order and when the problem is culturally inappropriate or noninclusive service delivery
5. Contributes to more accurate assessment of the child's welfare, family system, available support systems, placement needs, services needed, and delivery
6. Decreases cross-cultural communication clashes and opportunities for misunderstandings
7. Allows the family to utilize culturally appropriate solutions in problem solving
8. Encourages participation of family members in seeking assistance or support
9. Recognizes, appreciates, and incorporates cultural differences in ways that promote cooperation
10. Allows all participants to be heard objectively

Adapted from a document created by
CASA for Children, Inc., Portland, Oregon.

Because of homophobia and transphobia in their homes, schools, and social settings, LGBTQ youth enter the foster care system at a disproportionate rate. . . . Once in the foster care system, LGBTQ youth are often neglected and/or discriminated against by facility staff and peers, facilitated by inadequate policies, protections, support services and staff sensitivity.

— National Center for Lesbian Rights

LEARN MORE!

For more information on the special challenges LGBTQ youth face and how to work effectively with them, see the fact sheets about sexual orientation and youth in the Chapter 3 Resource Materials.

Activity 3I: An Action Plan for Increasing Cultural Competence

Part 1: There are many resources in your community for increasing your cultural competence. Consider going to the following places to learn more:

- Your local library
- Museums
- A university in your community
- The Internet
- Community agencies (such as the health department)
- Communities of faith
- Community groups focusing on the cultural traditions and norms of, as well as health services for, particular cultural or language groups

Can you think of any other resources for expanding your cultural competence? Share your ideas in the large group.

Part 2: Read the information on the next page about becoming more culturally competent and think about what steps you will take to improve your skills in these areas. On the worksheet that follows, write down the steps you will take. This plan is for you and will not be shared with the group.

Tips on How to Become More Culturally Competent

1. Learn about your culture and values, focusing on how they inform your attitudes, behavior, and verbal and nonverbal communication.
2. Don't place "good" and "right" values in your own culture exclusively; acknowledge that the beliefs and practices of other cultures are just as valid.
3. Question your cultural assumptions: Check their reality, rather than immediately acting on them.
4. Accept cultures different from your own and understand that those differences can be learned.
5. Learn to contrast other cultures and values with your own.
6. Learn to assess whether differences of opinion are based on style (communication, learning, or conflict) or substance (issue).
7. Practice the communication loop; don't rely on your perceptions of what is being said.
8. Examine the circle in which you live and play (this reflects your choice of peers). Expand your circle to experience other cultures, values, and beliefs.
9. Continue to read and learn about other cultures. Do your homework: Know something about another culture group prior to approaching them.
    - Follow appropriate protocol: Know and demonstrate respectful behavior based on the values of the group.
    - Use collaborative networks—church (spiritual), community, or other natural support groups of that culture.
    - Practice respect.
10. Understand that any change or new learning experience can be challenging, unsettling, and tiresome; give yourself a break and allow for mistakes.
11. Remember the reciprocal nature of relationships—give something back.
12. See multiculturalism as an exciting, fulfilling, and resourceful way to live.
13. Have fun and keep your sense of humor!

Adapted from materials developed by
CASA for Children, Inc., Portland, Oregon.

My Action Plan

I will increase my cultural competence by . . .

ACTION	DEADLINE	HELP NEEDED

THE DAWNING OF A NEW DAY

There once was a Rabbi who was asked by his students, "Teacher, how would one determine the hour when night ends and day begins?"

One student suggested, "Is it when one can distinguish a sheep from a dog in the distance?"

"No," said the Rabbi.

A second student ventured, "Is it when one can distinguish a date tree from a fig tree in the distance?"

"No," said the Rabbi.

"Please, tell us the answer," the students begged.

"It is when you can look into the face of a stranger and see your sister or brother," said the Rabbi. "Until then, night is still with us."

From *Teaching Tolerance,* Spring 2000. Originally from *Timbrel* (November–December 1998 issue). Contact the Mennonite Women's Office at 316-283-5100; mw@gcmc.org; P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Reprinted with permission.

Looking Ahead

RESOURCE MATERIALS EXPLORATION

Look at the Chapter 4 Web Resources or the Chapter 4 Resource Materials. Pick at least one website or article to explore, and share what you learn at the next debriefing session.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Select one agency from the list provided by the facilitator. Do some research about the services they provide, access to services, etc., using the Community Resources Worksheet, which follows, as a tool to assist you in gathering information. One question you might ask, in addition to general questions about access to the agency, is how the agency addresses the needs of your local community and the people from different cultures that make up that community.

This task is assigned early in training to allow you time to gather the materials. You will share the information you gather during the debriefing session for Chapter 9.

Community Resources Worksheet

In preparation for learning about community resources later in training, pick one agency to research from the list the facilitator provides. We suggest that you first ask CASA/GAL program staff if they have a contact person, and then call the agency for further information. You may collect the required information by phone or personal interview, or by asking for literature from the agency. Below, you will find some topics to guide you in your research. You will turn in this worksheet at the debriefing session for Chapter 9. Have fun and good luck!

Resource Name:	Date:
Address:	Phone:
Email Address:	Fax:
Contact Person:	
Days/Hours of Operation:	
Type of Services Available:	
Who Is Eligible for Services:	
Costs of Services:	
Notes:	