

New Committee and Board Chair Online Orientation

Week 9: Multicultural Infusion



What is meant by “multicultural infusion”?

Multicultural infusion refers to ensuring that the unique combination of cultural variables—including for example, ability, age, beliefs, ethnicity, experience, gender, gender identity, linguistic background, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc., that the professional and the client/patient/student bring to interactions are considered and addressed to the extent possible in the work done for the Association. Each and every individual has a culture, and thus, there are a number of dimensions that can impact each interaction and communication. ASHA has an expectation that members working on behalf of the Association will as appropriate, systematically address the influence of cultural and linguistic factors as a matter of routine in their operations.

What role does multicultural infusion play in the work of my committee?

Multicultural infusion ensures that the work of your committee serves multiple member or client populations, and extends the impact of your committee’s scope and the breadth of your programs, products, or services so they benefit any relevant member or client populations.

Why should multicultural issues be considered in the development or revision of Association programs and products?

ASHA has a philosophical and practical commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Professional competence requires that audiologists and speech-language pathologists practice in a manner that considers each client's/patient's/caregiver's cultural and linguistic characteristics and unique values so that the most effective assessment and intervention services can be provided. Thus, any work done for the Association and the products developed should reflect applicable cultural variables in education and service delivery. Integration of multicultural issues throughout service provision, and program or product development ensures that individuals are not un-served or under-served by the Association or its members.

Any practical tips on how I can get started?

Sure! Read below!

- Make a conscious effort to include members from diverse backgrounds on your Committee, Board, or Council. Your group’s composition should include members who are

diverse in as many dimensions as possible to gain as wide a variety of experiences, expertise and insight within your Committee, Board, or Council

- As you determine your group's work or projects, consider the potential relevance of what's being proposed for as wide a range of individuals as possible, make any needed adjustments to ensure applicability across cultural dimensions. Consider the applicability of what's being proposed for bilingual populations, for individuals from under-represented racial/ethnic backgrounds, for individuals with disabilities, for individuals who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, for individuals guided by religious or faith-based practices, etc.
- Use a broad approach to information/data collection to determine potential applicability to diverse populations
- Seek assistance from ASHA's Multicultural Issues Board (MIB), Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) staff, Multicultural Constituent Groups, and/or other organizations for access to information or subject matter expertise you may not have.

See the ASHA Web site for more Multicultural Issues and Resources
<http://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/>