

Learning Objective #2: Describe the role of cultural competence in public health workforce readiness and disaster response and recovery.

Cultural Competence in Public Health Workforce Readiness

A systematic process intended to increase public health practitioners': cultural awareness, knowledge of selves and others, communication skills, attitudes and behaviors.

Recognizing the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity to public health workforce readiness, the public health profession has established the following core competencies for all public health professionals:

Public Health Core (Cultural) Competencies: (Source: Council on Linkages Between Academic and Public Health Practice, 2001)

1. Utilizes appropriate methods for interacting sensitively, effectively, and professionally with persons from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, educational, racial, ethnic, and professional backgrounds, (and persons of all ages and lifestyle preferences, when assisting trauma survivors, their family members, and first responders).
2. Identifies the role of cultural, social, and behavioral factors in delivering trauma intervention services.
3. Develops and adapts approaches to assisting trauma survivors that take into account cultural differences.
4. Understands the dynamic forces contributing to cultural diversity.
5. Listens to others in an unbiased manner, respects points of view of others, and promotes the expression of diverse opinions and perspectives.

Public Health's Role in Disaster Response and Recovery:

- To promote and protect community health in disaster preparedness and response.
- To identify and address potentially affected individuals and populations and groups most at risk from disaster.
- To consider intervention needs for groups of special interest.
- To develop and adapt approaches to assisting disaster survivors that take into account cultural differences.

Role of Cultural Competence in Disaster Response and Recovery:

- Increases effectiveness of response and recovery efforts.
 - Lack of awareness about cultural differences makes it difficult for both responders and survivors to achieve the most appropriate care.
- Decreases risk for adverse effects, distress and disorders.
 - Ethnic and racial minority status are identified as potential moderating factors and predictors for adverse outcomes (Institute of Medicine [IOM], 2003).
 - Minority, immigrant, and refugee populations may be at higher risk for negative psychological consequences, based on prior experiences of traumatic events and language or cultural needs that are different from the majority (IOM, 2003).
- It is essential to building effective disaster response teams.