



New England (HHS Region 1)

ATTC

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Approaches to Integrating Culture into Treatment

Module 4

New England ATTC

Haner Hernández, Ph.D., CPS, CADCI, LADCI



New England (HHS Region 1)

ATTC

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

## Disclosures

The development of these training materials were supported by grant H79 TI080209 (PI: S. Becker) from the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services. The views and opinions contained within this document do not necessarily reflect those of the US Department of Health and Human Services, and should not be construed as such.



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Objectives

- Describe how individuals and organizations can incorporate culture into treatment.
- Describe special considerations related to substance use and recovery in Hispanic and Latino populations.



# How Culture Enters into Treatment



The provision of treatment is like completing a puzzle, which requires providers to take time to find the pieces and fit in position.



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Examine your Practices

- We all have strong cultural exposures whether we recognize it or not, so developing transcultural skills is part of our human experience.
- It is equally obvious that we need to incorporate knowledge about specific cultural groups if those are the ones that we tend to see in treatment most of the time.
- Learning transcultural skills in the context of ethnic groups we treat is the most rational approach.



# At the Organizational Level



The first step is making the decision to act, setting up a communication process, conducting an internal needs assessment and developing a work plan to improve cultural responsiveness.



# Examine

- Commitment to excellence
- Organizational infrastructure and capacity
- Nature of the SUDs
- Sustaining recovery



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



# Changing Organizational Practices

- An ethical commitment to improvement at all levels from individual practitioners and support staff to key administrators.
- Top down and bottom up definitions of the cultural issues to be addressed and a process being established to change business as usual.
- Improvement of the quality of communication and the ability of different levels of the organization to work together.





# Organizational Change

- It is especially useful to set goals and have regular feedback using data to determine if these goals are being met.
- Different functions of the organization should focus on how their operations can become more culturally proficient.
- Often operations have been developed from standard models of health care that were never intended for use with Hispanic and Latino populations.



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



# Culturally Responsive Recovery-Oriented Treatment

- Maximize the utility of existing resources.
- Improve coordination of treatments and services.
- Promote successful community integration for adults and children with mental health disorders.



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Organizational Infrastructure and Capacity

- Improving the flow of communication.
- Developing a well articulated plan that is continuously reviewed and refreshed to mark progress.
- Implementing mechanisms that are anchored by regular review.



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Culturally Proficient Operations

Every specialized area should study their own operations



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Culturally Proficient Operations

Use of cultural and linguistic competency self-assessments at the individual or organizational level



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Special Considerations

- Co-occurring disorders
- Gender roles
- Family issues
- Multiple substance use



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Co-Occurring Disorders



- Vulnerability
- Meeting basic needs
- Fear, shame and lack of resources



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



# Women

- Depression
- Violence



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Family and Mental Health Issues

- More tolerance
- Attitudes towards medication



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Family and Maintenance Therapy

- It may be very difficult for Hispanic and Latinos to understand the role of treatment for substance use disorder of a family member, primarily because they may not understand the chronic disease model deserving of compassion and material support.
- This is especially true for MAT such as methadone, but any therapy may require careful explanation to be understood and supported.



# Tobacco Use

Half of Hispanics and Latinos who start smoking continue to do so with different levels of regularity, and regular smoking has been associated with the progression to substance use disorders.



Vega & Gil, 2005



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Think About

Cultural sensitivity as a willingness to:

- learn
- incorporate
- infuse
- adapt
- use



New England (HHS Region 1)

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# References

National Hispanic and Latino ATTC. (2013). *Cultural elements in treating Hispanic and Latino populations (revision 2013)*. Bayamón, PR: Universidad Central del Caribe

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Leading Change: A Plan for SAMHSA's Roles and Actions 2011-2014*. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 11-4629. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2011.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health. (2005). What is cultural competency? Retrieved from <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlID=11>

Vega, W.A. and Gil, A.G. (2005). Revisiting drug progression: long range effects of early tobacco use. *Addiction* (100)1358-1369.

