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**North Sound Behavioral Health Organization**  
Section 1500 – Clinical: Cultural and Linguistic Competence

Authorizing Sources: 42 CFR 438.206(b); RCW 71.24.300;  
WAC 388-877-0600, 388-877-0620;  
State North Sound BHO Policies 1545,  
1558 and 6001

Approved by: Executive Director

Signature:

Date:

Providers must comply with this policy and may develop individualized implementation guidelines as needed  
Responsible Staff: Deputy Director

**POLICY #1521.00**

**SUBJECT: CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE**

**PURPOSE**

To promote, develop and maintain a culturally and linguistically competent public mental health service system of care for the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization (North Sound BHO) geographic service area.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Culture**

The integrated patterns of human behavior that include language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious and/or social groups.

**Cultural Identity**

The extent to which one relates self to race, ethnicity, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, region or country of origin, degree of acculturation, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs and the makeup of one's family.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence**

**Cultural Competence** means a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency and enable that system or agency to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. A culturally competent system of care acknowledges and incorporates at all levels the importance of language and culture, assessment of cross-cultural relations, knowledge and acceptance of dynamics of cultural differences, expansion of cultural knowledge and adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs.

**POLICY**

North Sound BHO and its providers will develop policies and procedures designed to promote the development and maintenance of cultural and linguistic competence toward its consumers, employees and the community at large.

## PROCEDURES

### 1. AGENCY CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

- 1.1** North Sound BHO will develop and establish policies and procedures that support cultural and linguistic competence in its Human Resources practices, system of care and service delivery to consumers and public relations with the community at large.
- 1.2** North Sound BHO will review its providers' policies and procedures periodically to ensure the promotion of cultural and linguistic competence throughout the mental health system of care at all levels. This will include a review of Individual Service Plans to assess whether they address age, gender, cultural, strengths and/or disability issues identified by the individual or, if applicable, the individual's parent(s) or legal representative [WAC 388-877-0620 (b)].
- 1.3** North Sound BHO will periodically assess, as part of its Quality Management Plan, the bilingual and bicultural capabilities of its service delivery system. A thorough analysis of all consumer and consumer-related data will be performed to ascertain the level of need for bilingual/bicultural staff. These analyses will include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Consumer demographic data;
  - b. Minority consumer penetration rates;
  - c. Provider periodic on-site contract review reports;
  - d. Consumer grievances, appeals and fair hearings.
  - e. Provision of interpreter/translation services based on the requirements of North Sound BHO Policy #1515.
- 1.4** Publications routinely circulated among minority communities will be regularly included in advertising for North Sound BHO and provider staff vacancies. Additionally, culturally sensitive groups, organizations and academic institutions may be contacted to maximize recruitment potential.
- 1.5** North Sound BHO conducts periodic on-site contract reviews of providers, which include review of documentation for orientation and training on cultural competence. This includes reviews conducted by the North Sound BHO Quality Review Team. In addition, North Sound BHO conducts a cultural and linguistic competence review of provider staff that includes:
  - a. Education level;
  - b. Knowledge of culturally competent policies and/or plan;
  - c. Participation in cultural competence training; and
  - d. Experience working with specific minority groups.

- 1.6 Providers shall develop and maintain a listing of their employees or others in the community who are certified interpreters in other languages, including American Sign Language, to ensure interpreter services are available. These lists shall be updated and submitted annually to North Sound BHO so that a master regional list can be established and maintained.
- 1.7 North Sound BHO will utilize the aggregate related data (e.g., review of provider policies and procedures, onsite contract reviews) to periodically assess its performance and effectiveness in developing, implementing, and maintaining cultural and linguistic competence.

**2. SPECIAL POPULATIONS [State RSN Contract Requirement 9.6.2.2.12]**

Special Populations – The Contractor shall ensure that Individuals who self-identify as having specialized cultural, ethnic, linguistic, disability, age, or gender identity related needs have those needs addressed. Referrals for specialty service consultation should be tracked through the treatment plan and progress notes. If a provider identifies a need, but it is deferred by the Consumer, the provider must document why they are not addressing it at this time.

**3. TRIBAL COORDINATION**

North Sound BHO will maintain a Tribal Coordination of Implementation of Services Plans to describe the Goals and Activities identified by the North Sound Tribal Nations to ensure equal access to behavioral health services for American Indians/Alaska Natives. The Tribal Coordination of Implementation of Services Plans will include:

- a. Arrangements for representation on the North Sound BHO Board of Directors and Advisory Board.
- b. Information about 7.01 Trainings provided by DSHS Office of Indian Affairs being forwarded to North Sound BHO Staff and Provider Agencies.
- c. Strategies to ensure optimum access to and inclusion in North Sound BHO contracted programs and/or culturally appropriate services for which Tribal Members are eligible.
- d. Strategies to provide culturally appropriate treatment for all Tribal consumers, and collaborative relationships between Tribes and PHP's in the treatment of Tribal individuals.
- e. A plan for providing training opportunities that address cultural sensitivity to Tribal Behavioral Health Workers and the public.
- f. Agreements to ensure that Tribes are notified of employment openings within North Sound BHO and Provider Agencies.
- g. A plan for the development of written Crisis Services agreements between North Sound BHO and each Tribal Authority to increase coordination in mental health crisis services, including psychiatric inpatient discharge planning, between Tribes and North Sound BHO Provider Agencies.

**4. CULTURAL COMPETENCE TRAINING**

- 4.1** North Sound BHO and its Provider Agencies will be required to conduct bi-annual Cultural Competence Self-Assessments to identify areas for staff training, strategies to strengthen culturally sensitive trauma informed systems of care, and plans for specialty service consultations.
- 4.2** The North Sound BHO Training Committee will review the North Sound BHO and Provider Agency Self-Assessments, on-site provider reviews, service data, and recommendations from Tribes to identify training opportunities to include in North Sound BHO’s annual training plan, including trainings that can be hosted on the Relias On-Line learning system.