

Some Dominant US Cultural Traits & Ideas for Responsiveness to Other Cultures

Some Examples:

1. Print culture vs oral culture

Ideas for culturally responsive action: Providing extra assistance, patience and compassion when requiring TEFAP paperwork. Share information in multiple ways – written, demonstrated, verbally, practice.

2. Time and urgency – time is money, efficiency is king, less value on relationship building and connectedness.

Ideas for culturally responsive action: Being conscious of other needs besides food assistance. Creating safe spaces for social exchange. Building relationships with those accessing services.

3. Strategic – future focused planners, linear “first this then this” strategizing. Other cultures highly value the here and now. We have the luxury of planning – many trauma filled lives are focused simply on survival and meeting basic needs.

Ideas for culturally responsive action – Serving people when they need food, not placing rigid rules on future dates of service or requiring appointments.

4. Quantity over Quality – Things that can be measured are valued more than things which cannot (numbers over relationships; how much rather than how).

Ideas for culturally responsive action: - Include process goals in planning, make sure your organization has a values statements which express the ways you want to do your work (make sure people are using daily!). Look for ways to measure process goals, with food – shopping style, healthy food choices.

5. Paternalism – When one party/group thinks they know what is best for another party/group.

Ideas for culturally responsive action – Include power sharing in your organization's values statement, policies, advisory councils. Shopping style pantries that allow customers to select their own food according to easy-to-understand guidelines.