



## Measuring Client Perspectives on Cultural Competence

In many ways, consumer and family perspectives are central to efforts to assess the cultural competence of services and supports provided to children and families. Assessment of family perspectives is valuable in helping service providers, organizations, and systems determine needs and priorities for efforts to move towards the positive end of the cultural competence continuum (Cross, 1988). Of course, in efforts to develop culturally competent organizations, attention is often focused on areas which are not directly experienced by children and families; for example, recruiting more administrators from underrepresented minority populations, or changing the type and amount of training available to service providers. Nevertheless, it stands to reason that efforts to increase the cultural competence at the service, organization, and system levels should produce results that will be perceived by the children and families who are being served. Furthermore, in contrast to assessments that rely primarily on data gathered from staff members, measures of family perspectives are less likely to be distorted by political, social, and internal pressures to view providers and organizations as being at and/or progressing successfully towards high levels of cultural competence.

Over the last few years, a research team at the University of Pittsburgh has been working on an instrument to measure cultural competence from consumer and family perspectives (Switzer, Scholle, Jonson, & Kelleher, 1998). Designed for use in mental health services, this instrument has recently been field tested among families receiving services from Community Connections for Families, a System of Care intervention in Allegheny County, PA (Bell & Scholle, 2002). The Client Cultural Competence Inventory (CCCI) was developed through a process that incorporated information from focus groups with providers and families, interviews, and a review of relevant research literature.

The CCCI is administered via a structured interview. In the field test with Community Connections

for Families, family members were asked to rate service coordinators by responding to items grouped into four subscales: respect for cultural differences, community and family involvement, appropriateness of assessment and treatment options, and agency services and structure. Results gave evidence of the tool's usefulness both in assessing cultural competence directly and in providing valuable informational input into a larger process of planning for continuous quality improvement.

The research team continues gathering data and refining the CCCI. They are seeking collaborations with communities or organizations that are interested in using the instrument and that are willing to share data so psychometric properties of the scale can be further investigated. For more information, contact Sara Hudson Scholle, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh at (412) 624-1703 or [scholles@pitt.edu](mailto:scholles@pitt.edu).

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### References

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