Bridging the Cultural Divide in Health & Mental Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Brokering Programs

Tawara D. Goode
National Center for Cultural Competence

October 2006

Georgetown University Center for Child & Human Development

University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
The act of bridging, linking or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change (Jezewski, 1990).

Source: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004

Developed by National Center for Cultural Competence, 2006
a health care intervention through which the professional increasingly uses cultural and health science knowledge and skills to negotiate with the client and the health care system for an effective beneficial health care plan (Wenger, 1995).

Source: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004
Definition of Cultural Broker

a go-between, one who advocates on behalf of another individual or group (Jezewki & Sotnik, 2001).

Source: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004

Developed by National Center for Cultural Competence, 2006
Rationale for Cultural Brokering in Health Care & Mental Health Care Systems

- emergent & projected demographic trends
- diverse beliefs systems related to health, mental health, healing, & well-being
- cultural influences on help-seeking behaviors
- attitudes toward health & mental health care providers
- use of indigenous & traditional health and mental health practices
- evidence supports effectiveness of cultural brokers

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004

Developed by National Center for Cultural Competence, 2006
Who is the Cultural Broker

- liaison
- cultural guide
- mediator
- catalyst for change

Source: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004
Characteristics & Attributes of a Cultural Broker

- trust & respect of the community
- knowledge of values, beliefs & health and mental health practices of cultural groups
- understanding of traditional & indigenous wellness and healing networks in diverse communities
- experience navigating health and mental health care delivery & support systems

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004
Who can fulfill the role of Cultural Broker

Cultural brokers may be any of the following:

- social worker
- interpreter
- health educator
- board member
- program support personnel
- healer & spiritualist

Source: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004

Developed by National Center for Cultural Competence, 2006
Who can fulfill the role of Cultural Broker

Cultural brokers may be any of the following:

- youth or family member
- outreach & lay health worker
- peer mentor
- advocate
- community member
- administrator
- program support personnel
- social worker
- board member
- nurse, physician, physical therapist, or other health or mental health care provider

Adapted from: "Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004"
Cultural Brokers may work in a variety of settings...

Adapted from: *Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs*, NCCC, 2004
Cultural Brokers may work in the following settings

- health and mental health clinics and practices
- community-based and ethnic-specific organizations
- family/youth and advocacy organizations
- schools
- government offices
- universities
- hospitals
- churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, kivas, plazas, & other places of worship

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004

Developed by National Center for Cultural Competence, 2006
Benefits to Patients, Clients & their Families

Potential to improve or increase …

- positive experiences
- satisfaction with services
- access
- mutual trust and respect
- effective communication
- community acceptance

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004
Benefits to the Provider

Potential to improve or increase …

- accurate assessment, diagnosis & treatment
- effective communication
- knowledge & connection with communities
- personal satisfaction

Adapted from: *Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs*, NCCC, 2004

Developed by National Center for Cultural Competence, 2006
Benefits to Health & Mental Care Health Systems

Potential to improve or increase …

- reputation in community
- use of preventive services
- cost effectiveness
- community trust & respect

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004

Developed by National Center for Cultural Competence, 2006
Benefits to the Health & Mental Health Care Systems

Potential to decrease …

- emergency room & acute care visits
- in contacts related to lack of understanding service plans and treatment protocols
- potential liability

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004
Guiding Principles for Cultural Broker Programs

*Cultural brokering* ...

- honors & respects cultural differences within communities
- is community-driven
- is provided in a safe, non-judgmental and confidential manner

Source: *Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs*, NCCC, 2004

Developed by National Center for Cultural Competence, 2006
Guiding Principles for Cultural Broker Programs

*Cultural brokering ...*

- involves service delivery that is accessible & tailored to communities served
- acknowledges reciprocity & transfer of assets between community and health and mental health care settings

Source: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004
Knowledge, Skills & Areas of Awareness for Cultural Brokers

AWARENESS

- own cultural identify
- cultural identify of members of diverse communities
- social political & economic factors affecting diverse communities

Source: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004
Knowledge, Skills & Awareness for Cultural Brokers

**KNOWLEDGE**

- values, beliefs & practices related to illness, health, mental health & well-being of cultural groups
- traditional or indigenous health and mental health care networks within diverse communities
- medical, health care and mental health care systems

Adapted from: *Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs*, NCCC, 2004

Developed by National Center for Cultural Competence, 2006
Knowledge, Skills & Awareness for Cultural Brokers

SKILLS

- communicate in cross-cultural context
- communicate in 2 or more languages
- interpret and/or translate information
- advocate with & on behalf of patients, clients, & their families
- negotiate health, mental health & other service delivery systems
- mediate & manage conflict

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004
Implementing & Sustaining Cultural Brokering Programs

- Create a vision and ensure the commitment of leadership
- Get buy in and acceptance among stakeholders & constituency groups.
- Develop a logic model or framework for the program
- Identify and allocate resources