Diversity & Cultural Competency

The Clermont County Board of Developmental Disabilities is committed to expanding the participation rates of people of diverse backgrounds who have disabilities in advocacy efforts and every aspect of life.

Our commitment to equity, opportunity, and inclusion for all people with disabilities has led the Clermont County Board of Developmental Disabilities to become fully invested in empowering persons of diverse ages, genders, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds with disabilities and their families. Persons of diverse backgrounds with disabilities often face multiple barriers, including access to services and supports and discrimination in community, education, and employment settings. Research indicates that, while people with disabilities face enhanced challenges, those of diverse backgrounds are disproportionately affected. They face higher incarceration rates, over-representation in segregated special education programs and diminished social and employment outcomes, among other things.

The Clermont County Board of Developmental Disabilities recognizes the value of diversity and what it means to embrace cultural and linguistic competency. We believe individuals of diverse backgrounds must be supported by public and organizational policy and practices in order to achieve full inclusion. This acknowledgement, support, and advocacy of diversity is essential to attaining positive outcomes for people with disabilities, and building a sense of community. It is our goal to connect persons of diverse backgrounds with disabilities to the organizations, services, and supports that lead to community inclusion and positive life outcomes.

The Clermont County Board of Developmental Disabilities is committed to cultural and linguistic competency, and we continue to shed light on the issues, policies, and practices that impact people of diverse backgrounds with disabilities. Cultural competency isn't achieved through an article, event, or webinar. It is achieved by embracing the differences in us all, celebrating our unique contributions, and supporting equity in access, services, and outcomes for all people.

The demographics of Clermont County as of 2012 US census data indicate a county with a population of 199,000 people, 96% Caucasian, 1.3% African American, 1.6% Hispanic or Latino, 0.2% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 1.1% Asian. 3.8% of the population indicates a language other than English is spoken at home. Although Clermont County is considered statically a part of the Metropolitan Cincinnati area, the county is officially designated as part of "central Appalachia," a political, cultural, and bioregional classification that includes southeastern Ohio, eastern Kentucky, and most of West Virginia.

Examples of diversity awareness and knowledge include areas such as spiritual beliefs, holidays, dietary regulations or preferences, clothing, attitudes towards impairments, language, and how/when to use interpreters. We should be able to demonstrate how we have modified service delivery based on the knowledge gained….modified service plans, personnel training, increased satisfaction of stakeholders.

The Clermont County Board of Developmental Disabilities respects the cultural diversity in Clermont County and has taken the following actions to support this diversity:

- The agency has the ability to access interpretive services as needed, including a subscription to Language Line Solutions for telephone and in-person interpreter services when contacted by non-English speaking individuals. This information is available during person-to-person meetings and can be accessed on our website.

- The agency's Accessibility Plan contains information under Communication Barriers about special consideration of different disabilities and cultures.

- All employees have completed Cultural Diversity training via the web-based training program, and all new hires complete this Cultural Diversity training at HR Orientation. Additional Cultural Diversity training for staff and individuals takes place as needed.

- The agency will continuously assess cultural competency needs and address those needs as they arise.

- Clermont DD offers a Disability Awareness Curriculum that is presented to groups who are interested in learning more about individuals with developmental disabilities and the Clermont DD program in general. This curriculum gives group members the opportunity to experience what it feels like to have a disability and offers individuals as speakers who tell their own stories in person or through videotaped interviews.

- Programs provide activities for individuals and staff to learn about and celebrate different cultural beliefs. Discussions are led by employees to promote open discussions about different culture groups that may include spiritual beliefs, holidays, diet, clothing, attitudes towards disabilities, language, gender related issues, and aging related issues.

- Community engagement activities will be planned to take place in a variety of settings so that individuals can gain experience interacting with people outside their own culture.

- Clermont DD has been a partner with Clermont FASTTRAC and has benefitted as an agency by inclusion in the various trainings and outreach which includes speakers, activities, and trainings which increase cultural knowledge