Understanding the Impact of Culture

David T. Helm, PhD
LEND Director
Institute for Community Inclusion/UCEDD
Boston Children’s Hospital
University of Massachusetts Boston
Autism CARES
Bethesda, MA
June 10, 2017

Supported by grant funds from US DHHS, HRSA, MCHB T73MC00020 LEND Program
LEND Mission

“All children, youth, and families will live and thrive in healthy communities served by a quality workforce that helps assure their health and well being.”
Dr. Allen C. Crocker, MD
Director 1967-2008
### 2012 Population by Race and Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population by Race</th>
<th>Boston, MA</th>
<th>Massachusetts</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population by Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Population</td>
<td>51.22%</td>
<td>79.19%</td>
<td>71.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American Population</td>
<td>25.89%</td>
<td>7.12%</td>
<td>12.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native Population</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>0.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Population</td>
<td>10.05%</td>
<td>5.87%</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial Population</td>
<td>4.34%</td>
<td>2.88%</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Population</td>
<td>8.14%</td>
<td>4.66%</td>
<td>6.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population by Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population by Ethnicity</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population Hispanic</td>
<td>18.85%</td>
<td>10.40%</td>
<td>16.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Non Hispanic</td>
<td>81.15%</td>
<td>89.60%</td>
<td>83.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BOSTON: DBP, LEAH, Public Health

Jean Emans

Marie McCormick

Leonard Rappaport
Cultural lens
LEND Faculty
LEND Fellows

Speakers at LEND events
Goals of cross cultural competence

1. Feel comfortable and effective in their interactions and relationships with families whose culture and life experiences differ
2. Interact with families that enable them to feel positive about the interaction
3. Accomplish the goals that each family and provider establish
Cross Cultural Competencies

“…the ability to think, feel, and act in ways that acknowledge, respect, and build upon ethnic, (socio)cultural, and linguistic diversity”

Lynch & Hanson, 1993
Community Based Organizations

• Boston Center for Independent Living
• Eritrean Community Center
• Somali Development Center
• Threshold Program at Lesley University
• Family Nurturing Center
• Partners for Youth with Disabilities

• Urban PRIDE
• Multi-Cultural Independent Living Center of Boston (MCILB)
• Haitian American Public Health Initiative
• Massachusetts Alliance for Portuguese Speakers
• Great Wall
• Nazareth Residence for Mothers and Children
Abdi Yusuf

Renald Raphael
Mission statement

The mission of Somali Development Center is to provide consistently excellent and accessible community services to all Somalis (and other African communities) in Boston…….
A home away from home
Somali Development Center helps refugees forge a new life in Boston

By Omar Sayfudeen

Mustan Kashim Ahmed came home one day in 1991 and found her husband dead. He wasn't a soldier, but Ahmed suspects he was killed in one of the many random acts of violence that plagued Mogadishu, the war-torn capital of Somalia, and the rest of the country, during and after the civil war.

 Rituals were conducted by the Somali community in the United States, including prayers and commemorations. The community also provided support to Ahmed and her family, helping them to settle in and find work.

In 2000, Ahmed moved to the United States with her family. She was able to find work and support her family. 

Arriving in Boston March 30, 2000, Ahmed already knew some Somali she could stay with until finding more permanent housing: Within a few weeks, she was able to find a small apartment. She found a job as a translator at the Somali Development Center in Jamaica Plain that taught English, U.S. history, government, and civic skills.

Ahmed's daughter, Fatimah, started school when they moved to Boston. She has now graduated from high school and is studying to become a teacher.

Ahmed doesn't dwell on the past and dismisses her troubles as "nothing" while encouraging her周围 to "be strong, God." When asked about her husband, Ahmed says she has a short, tired laugh and points to a headline in the Metro newspaper: "Then she said three times on crowded Orange Line."
"We’re not trying to Americanize them, but just give them a view of how things work here."

Naima Hashi
teacher at SDC
LEND projects with Somali Development Center

✓ Teaching English as a Second Language
✓ Citizenship Class
✓ Grant writing
✓ Nutrition
✓ Focus group – meaning of disability
✓ Legal assistance re IEPs, education rights
LESSONS LEARNED:

✓ Translating language is just one step necessary for effective communication

✓ Understanding culture in the context of disability is key to providing the most sensitive and competent care for families navigating through the medical system
Cultural brokers are especially important to communities impacted by the need for political asylum.

Every family is different and we have to be open to learn from them and to hear them.
Promoting the Health and The Well-Being of The Haitian Community

Founded in 1989 by a group of Haitian-American health care professionals to address pressing public health issues confronting Boston's Haitian community.
Haitian American Public Health Initiative (HAPHI)

HAPHI is a minority run, non-profit agency dedicated to providing members of the Haitian-American community in Metro Boston with culturally and linguistically accessible information and services to improve their health and wellbeing.
LEND Projects with HAPHI

✓ Resource manual
✓ After school program
✓ Trauma group
✓ Dance troupe
Dance Troupe

Haitian dances
LESSONS LEARNED:

✓ What you expect from a family from another country is often not what you find.

✓ One’s own cultural beliefs and biases are hard to recognize.

✓ This experience has really expanded my understanding of disability and my role in it.
“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

MLK
Understanding our patients, clients and/or customers is the key to delivering culturally sensitive services, thus breaking down barriers to access and reducing disparities in health care coverage.
To learn about cross-cultural perspectives is to begin to understand the impact of culture.