

# KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION BRIEF

## The Culturally Proficient Professional

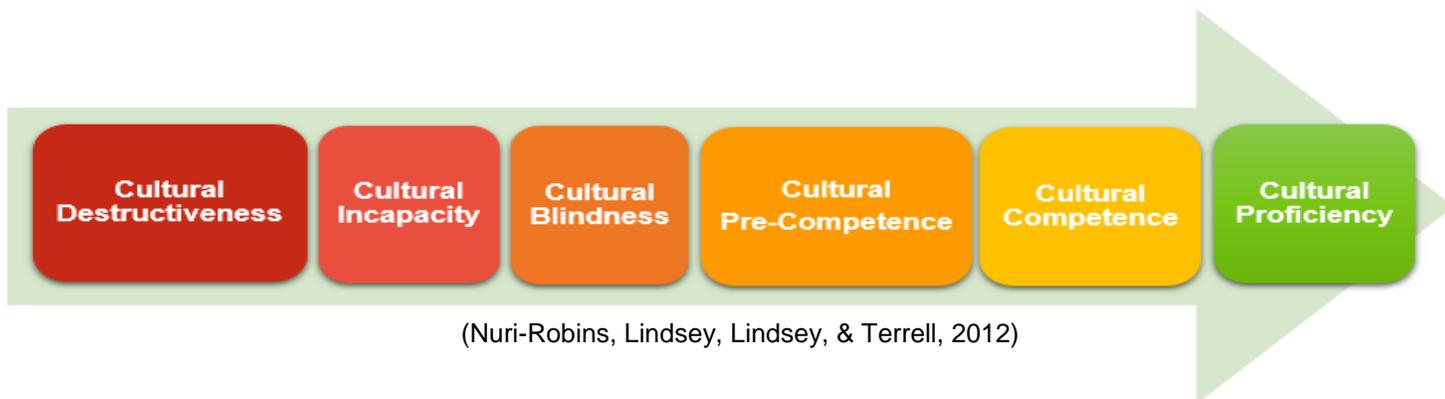
Strategies 2.0

Significant health and well-being disparities exist among children and adults living in the United States. As such, there has been a strong emphasis on health care systems and social service agencies to focus on the importance of becoming organizationally and professionally culturally sensitive or aware. This has resulted in a variety of models and language designed to address cultural diversity in health promotion.



**Cultural competency** aims to help individuals “see the difference and understand the difference that difference makes” (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003). Cultural competence plays a vital step in providing culturally sensitive and appropriate care and service, however, it is not until **cultural proficiency** is achieved that professionals can truly “work well with, respond effectively to, and [be] supportive of people in cross-cultural settings” (AAFP, 2017). **Cultural proficiency** requires individuals to not only “see our differences” but to know how to respond effectively and affirm those differences in order to provide person and family centered care (Lindsey et al., 2003).

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum [pictured below] provides us with language to describe and discuss behaviors and situations that we observe in our everyday work and personal life. These stages can describe individuals, organizations, or the characteristics of situations. The continuum moves from left to right, starting with the least desirable state of cultural destructiveness. As we move through the continuum, through cultural incapacity, cultural blindness, cultural pre-competence, cultural competence, the observable behaviors become more in line with the guiding principles, until we arrive at the desired state of cultural proficiency.



(Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2012)

As family strengthening professionals, a first step in becoming **culturally proficient** is recognizing “the ways in which our thoughts, perceptions, and impressions are shaped about people whose cultural backgrounds differ from our own” (Wells, 2000, p. 190). It is vital to understand, embrace, recognize, and respect the different cultures of the children, families and the communities we serve and to understand how our own biases may be directly or indirectly influencing our interactions (Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Terrell, & Lindsey, 2005).

## Take Action

Start moving towards **cultural proficiency** today!

1. Identify the difference culture makes in health service and outcomes.
2. Begin seeing how those differences play out in your organization.
3. Sign up for Strategies 2.0 training “The Culturally Proficient Professional”, where you will actively engage in self-reflection while recognizing and challenging your ideas, biases, and beliefs about culture.

**It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.**

**-Audre Lorde**

### **Resources:**

Staats, C., Capatosto, K., Wright, R.A., & Jackson, V.W. (2016). State of science: Implicit bias review 2016.

Lindsey, R.B., Robins, N., Terrell, R.D. (2009). Cultural proficiency: A manual for school leaders (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Jones, M.E., Cason, C.L., & Bond, M.L. (2004). Cultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills of a health workforce. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 15(4), 283-290.

### **References:**

American Academy of Family Physicians. (2017). Cultural Proficiency. Retrieved from: <http://aafp.org/patient-care/social-determinants-of-health/cultural-proficiency.html>

Lindsey, R. B., Robins, K. N., & Terrell, R. D. (2003). *Cultural proficiency: a manual for school leaders* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Nuri-Robins, K., Lindsey, R.B., Lindsey, D., & Terrell, R. (2012). *Culturally proficient instruction: A guide for people who teach* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Nuri-Robins, K., Lindsey, R.B., Lindsey, D., & Terrell, R. (2005). *Culturally proficient instruction: A guide for people who teach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Wells, M.I. (2000). Beyond cultural competence: A model for individual and institutional cultural development. *Journal of Community Health Nursing*, 17(4), 189-199.



## Strategies 2.0

Strategies 2.0 is a multi-dimensional initiative to help professionals and organizations make a bigger impact.

We train, support, and link professionals and organizations together to more effectively support families as well as build power to advance equity and opportunity in our communities.

