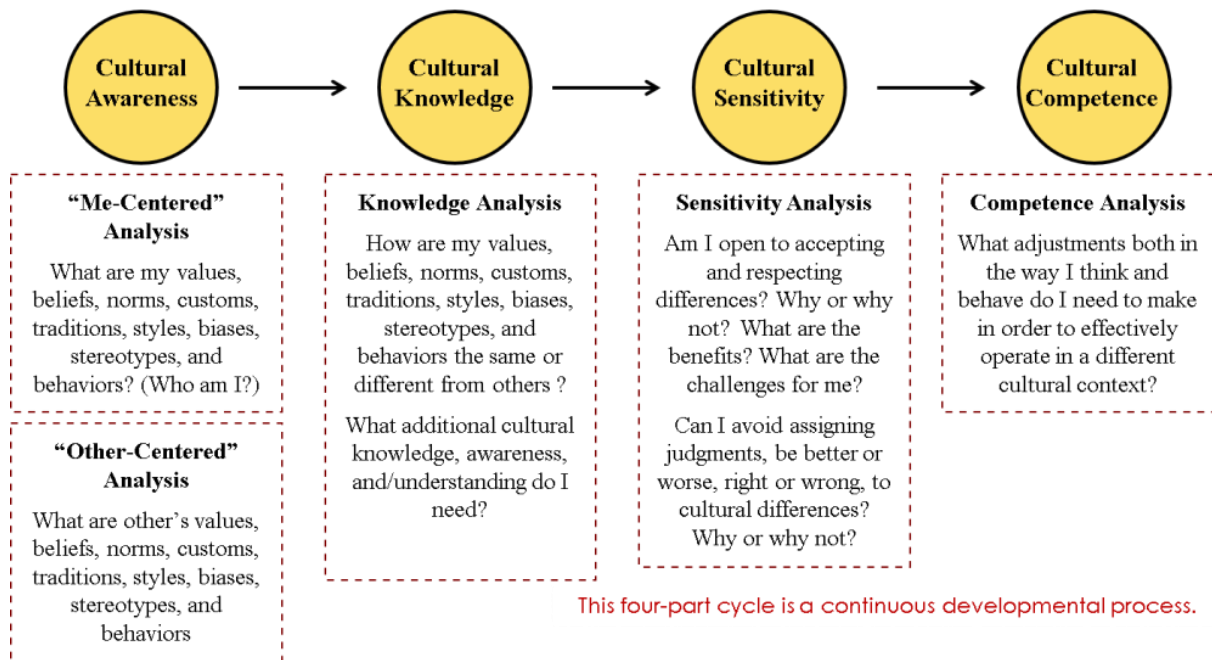




Understanding Cultural Competency

The school encourages teachers to participate and engage in professional learning opportunities that aim to develop understanding of cultural competency, awareness and responsiveness. Understanding the difference is crucial to all educators and their practice.

Cultural Competence Model™



This four-part cycle is a continuous developmental process.



Cultural Awareness

Developing *cultural awareness* is often the first step in working with young people and families. This involves learning about the cultural norms, values, beliefs and practices of the CLD communities that your agency services. Workers should find out about the:

- › languages spoken within these communities
- › traditional family structure within the CLD groups
- › child-rearing practices
- › approaches to discipline
- › religious affiliations etc.

Much of this information can be gained through reading relevant literature and speaking with cultural consultants or ethno-specific workers.

Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural sensitivity occurs when a practitioner develops an understanding that families within cultural groups differ considerably in the way they express their culture. They may differ in how they express cultural norms or to what extent they follow norms.

Culturally sensitive practitioners rely less on norms, although still referring to them as a basis for understanding, and try to understand culture from each family's unique perspective. This level of work develops over an extended period of time through exposure to families from culturally diverse backgrounds.



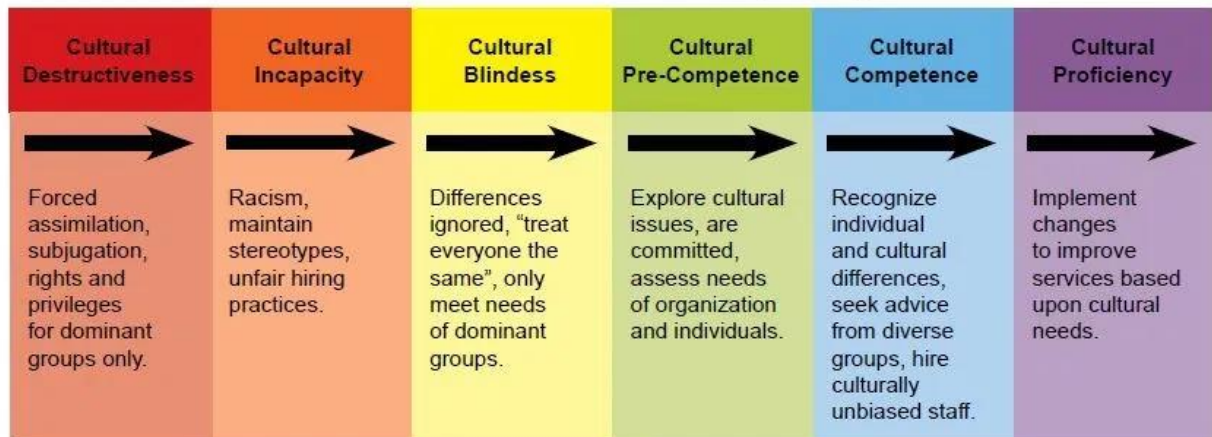
Cultural Competency

A worker achieves *cultural competency* when they can understand how their own cultural norms impact on the way they view themselves, the families they are working with and the situation they are facing together. Culturally competent workers are less judgemental and more flexible in their response to how others interpret and respond to events.

Cultural competence can be defined as:

The ability to identify and challenge one's own cultural assumptions, values and beliefs. It is about developing empathy and connected knowledge, the ability to see the world through another's eyes, or at the very least, to recognise that others may view the world through different cultural lenses.²

Continuum of Cultural Competency





Cultural Responsiveness

Culture is central to learning. It plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information, but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. A pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates fundamental cultures offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures.

Culturally Responsive Teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Some of the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching are:

1. *Positive perspectives on parents and families*
2. *Communication of high expectations*
3. *Learning within the context of culture*
4. *Student-centered instruction*
5. *Culturally mediated instruction*
6. *Reshaping the curriculum*

Reference:

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing Co.

Information about Cultural Responsiveness at Flinders View PS can be found in the Teaching and Learning Handbook (Under Explicit Instruction- The Knowing).