



National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care

Adapted by Connecticut's Network of Care Transformation initiative, Connecting to Care

Adapting the National CLAS Standards to Include Concepts of Racial Justice

Connecting to Care is a federally-funded initiative focused on improving the state's behavioral health system for children. In order to best serve all children with behavioral health needs in our state, the services that children and families might benefit from must be racially just, culturally responsive, and linguistically appropriate. Connecting to Care offers a blueprint for child- and family-serving organizations to implement racially just and culturally and linguistically appropriate services that will advance and improve the quality of care and help eliminate disparities in access and outcomes for children of color.

Racial justice is defined as "the systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond anti-racism. It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures."¹ The statewide CLAS workgroup of the Connecting to Care initiative has modified the National CLAS Standards² to be more inclusive of racial justice. We believe that this is imperative for the institutional transformation and organizational change needed in order to effectively serve children and families of color and increase positive outcomes for their behavioral health and overall well-being.

Principal Standard

- 1.) Provide **racially just**, effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to the diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.

Governance, Leadership, and Workforce

- 2.) Advance and sustain organizational governance and leadership that promotes **racial justice**, CLAS, and health equity through internal policy, practices, and allocated resources.
- 3.) Recruit, promote, and support a **racially**, culturally, and linguistically diverse governance, leadership, and workforce that are responsive to the population in the service area.
- 4.) Educate and train governance, leadership, and workforce in **racially just**, culturally responsive, and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis.

1. Race Forward cited in MP Associates, Center for Assessment and Policy Development and World Trust Educational Services, 2019. *Glossary*. Retrieved from: https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/RET_Glossary_Updated_October_2019_.pdf

2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health. No date. *National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care*. Retrieved from: <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/assets/pdfs/EnhancedNationalCLASStandards.pdf>

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Communication and Language Assistance

- 5.) Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services.
- 6.) Inform all individuals of the availability of language assistance services clearly and in their preferred language, verbally and in writing.
- 7.) Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance, recognizing that the use of untrained individuals and/or minors as interpreters should be avoided.
- 8.) Provide easy-to-understand print and multimedia materials and signage in the languages commonly used by the populations in the service area.

Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability

- 9.) Establish **racially just** and culturally and linguistically appropriate goals, policies, and management accountability, and infuse them throughout the organization's planning and operations.
- 10.) Conduct ongoing assessments of the CLAS-related activities and integrate CLAS-related measures into measurement and continuous quality improvement activities.
- 11.) Collect and maintain accurate and reliable demographic data to monitor and evaluate the impact of CLAS on health equity and **racially just** outcomes and to inform service delivery.
- 12.) Conduct regular assessments of community health assets and needs and use the results to plan and implement services that respond to the **racial**, cultural, and linguistic diversity of populations in the service area.
- 13.) Partner with the community to design, implement, and evaluate policies, practices, and services to ensure **racial justice** and cultural and linguistic appropriateness.
- 14.) Create conflict and grievance resolution processes that are **racially just** and culturally and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent, and resolve conflicts or complaints.
- 15.) Communicate the organization's progress in implementing and sustaining **racial justice** and CLAS to all stakeholders, constituents, and the general public.

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