



ACCESS IRELAND
Cultural Mediation Project
Mayte Calvo Martin – 2003

Why Cultural Mediation?

- All members of the society have the right to equal access to public and private services, it is a basic human right.

What is Cultural Mediation?

- Cultural Mediation is the process through which a cultural mediator acts as a cultural broker between service providers and clients from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- They assist service providers to deliver a culturally sensitive and competent service
- They empower minority ethnic communities.
- Cultural mediators are a resource both for service providers and for the various minority ethnic communities.

Cultural mediation training programme

- Subjects focus on 3 areas:
 - Health & Social services
 - Mediation & Interpreting techniques
 - Culture & Health, Cross-cultural communications and cultural diversity

Responsibilities of a Cultural Mediator

- Communication link between service providers and minority ethnic users
- Facilitating access to the services by providing information to minority ethnic users
- Supporting and encouraging minority ethnic clients so that they can promote their own needs and interests when using the services
- Delivering training and awareness raising sessions for service providers and for members of the different minority ethnic communities

Examples of cases where cultural mediators can be useful (1)

- Facilitating the communication between health care teams and minority ethnic patients in conveying an understanding of the causes and treatment of particular illnesses.
- Assisting families from ethnic minority communities, who have relatives with disabilities, to understand the different cultural aspects involved.

Example of cases (2)

- Easing the interaction between social workers and minority ethnic clients when addressing parenting, childcare and other issues
- Helping and supporting families at times of crisis such as the death of a child
- Helping a patient who may have difficulty in accepting a particular treatment on religious grounds

Elements of our Code of Practice

- Maintaining a high level of performance (Techniques, professional attitude, accuracy and cultural awareness)
- Remaining neutral
- Maintaining confidentiality/boundaries
- Not interfering with service providers
- Respecting clients cultural and religious values
- Refraining from abusing their power

Needs of a Mediator

- Adequate briefing
Background, purpose and context of case
- Explanation of agency policies
Protection of mediator
- Respect and support by agency
Mediation can be stressful job; mediator needs support from the agency
- Adequate time for supervision and feed back

For More Information contact:

mayte@accessireland.ie