



Focus on Module 4:

The Impact of Race, Ethnicity, and Culture, and Diversity

In **Module 4**, participants learn how race, ethnicity, culture, and diversity may impact a child’s experience of adoption or guardianship and the mental health issues that may occur. Lessons focus on understanding challenges in various types of diverse families. Following are a few suggestions on how to use the lessons in practice.

RACE MATTERS

Plan a team meeting to increase awareness of relevant definitions and constructs by focusing on a specific module. For example:

- Show Anthony Peterson’s Ted Talk to launch a discussion about the construct of “race”.
- Support the discussion with **Handout 4.1.3**, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” to increase understanding why race matters. The Resources tab in this section includes additional articles on race and diversity.

RAISE AWARENESS

Utilize activities built into the modules to generate group discussion with staff and/or families. For example: “How Diverse is Your Universe?” is an experiential marble activity that demonstrates the diversity (or lack thereof) of our own circles. How does this visual representation feel to you? How might our personal “Universe” impact our work? What can we shift or change to improve our perspectives and our practices?

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Module 4, Lesson 5 focuses on working with LGBTQ Families. This module includes strategies for talking with LGBTQ youth. First, explore your own feelings, beliefs and biases about LGBTQ individuals. Then establish a relationship of openness and trust, modeling this engagement for others.



Lead by Example (cont'd)

Handout 4.5.1 offers the following suggestions:

- Support youth-led, youth-driven, youth-centered plans and processes.
- Be willing to ask questions like: “What are your pronouns?” and “How do you identify?”
- Remember: sexuality and gender are NOT their life!
- Go beyond cultural sensitivity.
- Meet youth where they are.

Are you aware of an LGBTQ youth on your caseload or the caseload of a colleague? Invite a colleague to share lunchtime and have a conversation about leading by example to support the youth and others.

ASSESS PROVIDERS’ CAPACITY TO WORK WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS OF YOUTH

Module 4, Lesson 5 provides specific questions to ask when assessing community mental health providers who have expertise or who may be open to exploring issues of race, ethnicity and sexual identity with your families. Asking the questions of potential providers ensures that your families are receiving help they are seeking. Use these questions to build strong relationships with those who can best meet the needs of youth and families.

FACILITATE OPEN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT DIVERSITY

Host open forums and invite your mental health partners to learn more about the diversity issues impacting youth and families, including race, class, ethnicity, LGBTQ, and other special needs to ensure that families get the best possible support from the mental health community. This module includes excellent resources from the Children’s Bureau (childwelfare.gov) and the Human Rights Campaign (hrc.org) on the document entitled, “References M4L5”.

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Improved Competence**

“I think that the focus on the multi cultural and LGBTQ adoption is very helpful to my work.”

“I think I learned the most from the culture module.”

See More Tip Sheets from NTI

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