

Stages of Cultural Competence

Level I (Parochial Stage): “My way is the only way.” At the first level, people are aware of their way of doing things, and see their way as being the right way. They ignore the impact of cultural differences.

Level II (Ethnocentric Stage): “I know their way, but my way is better.” At the second level, people are aware of other ways of doing things but still consider their way as the best one. In this stage, cultural differences are perceived as a source of problems and people tend to ignore them or reduce their significance.

Level III (Synergistic Stage). “My way and their way.” At this level, people are aware of their own way of doing things and others’ ways of doing things and they choose the best way according to the situation. At this stage people realize that cultural differences can lead both to problems and benefits. They are willing to use cultural diversity to create new solutions and alternatives.

Level IV (Participatory Stage). “Our way.” This fourth stage brings people from different cultural backgrounds together for the creation of a culture of shared meanings. People dialogue repeatedly with others, create new meanings, and establish new rules to meet the needs of a particular situation.