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## Developing Cultural Competence in Disaster Mental Health Programs: Guiding Principles and Recommendations

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### **Foreword**

### **Introduction**

**This guide includes two sections and six appendices.**

**SECTION ONE** explores the nature of culture and disaster. It begins by defining culturally related terms, discussing diversity within racial and ethnic groups, and describing cultural competence. It then discusses cultural competence in the context of disaster mental health services. Section 1.1 presents the Cultural Competence Continuum and a list of questions to consider in a disaster mental health plan. Readers seeking more detail about crisis or disaster response and recovery may refer to other CMHS/FEMA publications. For example, the *Training Manual for Mental Health and Human Services in Major Disasters* (DHHS, 2000e) provides a comprehensive overview of essential information on training concepts on crisis counseling, including a training curriculum. *Disaster Response and Recovery: A Strategic Guide* (Rev. ed., in press) also is a useful resource.

**SECTION TWO** sets forth nine guiding principles for culturally competent disaster mental health services and related recommendations for developing these services. It also presents the key concepts of disaster mental health; it discusses considerations when working with people of other cultures; staff attributes, knowledge, and skills essential to the development of cultural competence; and a cultural competence self-assessment for disaster crisis counseling programs.

addition, Section Two provides suggestions for working with refugees and guidelines for using interpreters.

The appendices provide additional information that may be useful in developing cultural competence in disaster mental health.

**APPENDIX A** is an annotated bibliography of cultural competence resources and tools. Many of these resources provide detailed information about individual populations' histories, immigration patterns, and experiences with stress and trauma.

**APPENDIX B** lists disaster mental health technical assistance resource publications available through CMHS. Some of these materials discuss the development and provision of services for special populations.

**APPENDIX C** lists online resources that provide community-specific data and statistical information.

**APPENDIX D** lists Federal, private-sector, professional, and other organizations with cultural competence expertise.

**APPENDIX E** is a glossary of terms associated with disaster mental health and cultural competence.

**APPENDIX F** is a Cultural Competence Checklist for Disaster Crisis Coordination Programs. Based on concepts discussed throughout this guide, the checklist covers essential principles for ensuring a culturally competent disaster mental health program.

## References

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