Examining Cultural and Linguistic Competency (CLC) of the Partners® Program

- Formed Chinese and Spanish advisory groups and facilitated their review of the Partners® curriculum and the Partners® learning platform using a CLC Assessment checklist.
- Conducted five focus groups across NYS with Chinese and Spanish-speaking community members about their perceived learning needs and whether the online Partners® program would meet their needs.
- Developed a Language Access Plan for the Partners® program and list of recommendations for improving cultural and linguistic competency of the Partners® program.

Language Access Plan

A language access plan (LAP) outlines steps to ensure programs and service providers communicate information clearly and effectively to people with limited English proficiency (LEP) who may also be individuals with disabilities, or have no or low literacy skills. Development of LAP promotes cultural and linguistic competence of the program, service, or organization because it supports those entities recognize the different communication and information access needs of people with different languages and cultural backgrounds.

Overview of the process of LAP development

The current language access plan (LAP) includes five parts: (Part 1) background on NYS Partners in Policymaking (Part 2) general language access policy, (Part 3) language access self-assessment, and (Part 4) language assistance procedures. General language access policy describes the purpose of developing a LAP and operating principles that govern the implementation of the LAP to support LEP family members and individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Language access self-assessment determines the process of evaluating the Partners in Policymaking (OSS) program so that program participants with limited English language proficiency and disabilities can have meaningful access to the program model and objectives. Language assistance procedures detail the “how-to” steps of language access implementation. This LAP is based on the Department of Justice’s Language Access Plan template, and features of this LAP are cross-referenced with the LAP for LEP individuals for the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). The original documents can be found at https://www.cornell.edu/enviro/box/language-access-recources (Language Access Policy & Plan Template) and https://bit.ly/3qz6P7z (Language Access Policy & Plan Template).

Pre-Focus Group Preparation

- Provide training to moderator and translator prior to conducting the focus group.
- Translate interview questions and all related materials with back-translation process.
- Ensure translators that are hired are familiar with the topic of interest.

Focus Group Process

- Invite a community support provider who works closely with the participants to join the group as a moderator.
- Articulate interview process and set clear expectations.

LESSON LEARNED

Strategies when conducting a feasibility assessment with culturally and linguistically diverse groups

- Outreach and partner with cultural-specific agencies.
- Ask language preferences for communication.
- Encourage flexible meeting schedules and channels of communication.

Task Orientation

- Provide a descriptive guide including examples of a completed CLC checklist.

Communication

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