

Diversity awareness and cultural competence refers to the ability to 1) identify, understand, and celebrate differences that exist among individuals, i.e., race, ethnicity, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, age, gender, socio-economic background/social class, world view and other central features of the human experience, and 2) to intervene with sensitivity to and respect for these differences utilizing cardinal social work values and knowledge/skills specific to the diversity/cultural practice content (Garcia & Van Soest, 1997; Gutierrez, 1990; Iglehart & Becerra, 1995, Lum, 1996; Pinderhughes, 1989; Mackelsprang & Salsgiver, 1999; Rivera & Erlich, 1998; Simon, 1994; Uehara & Sohng, 1996; Van Voorhis, 1998).