

Enhancing Cultural Competence In Healthcare Leadership And Team Collaboration

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The field of healthcare has always been an ever-emerging arena with a lot of challenges, diversities, complexities, and changes from all walks of life. Healthcare professionals, during their everyday work life, face numerous challenges and encounter a number of people from various strata, regions, ethnicities, cultures, and countries. Therefore, a healthcare leader or professional must be knowledgeable and skilled in their respective field as well as communication skills so that they can effectively communicate queries and challenges with multiple people. In this self-reflection assessment paper, I will reflect on the scores of my cultural competence, areas that I need to improve, the potential benefits of the areas that need improvement for my career prospects, and lastly, the relationship between cultural competence, collaboration, and teamwork.

Part I

Cultural Competence Self-Reflection

Leadership Cultural Diversity Assessment

After completing the Culture, Diversity, and Out-groups Leaderships assignment, I was given 50 out of 70 marks, which helped me learn a lot about cultural competence. The score revealed after the evaluation of the assignment reflected that I have a little interest in helping out-group members because I got scores in the low range of the questionnaire. The evaluation also explained that I would easily become irritated if one member of the out-group hindered the progress and prospects of the majority of the larger group, which is why I would likely ignore incompetent out-group members while helping them. As I was helping out-group members to become members of the larger group as an ineffective use of my time, it was also possible that I would make decisions without their input to move forward in the larger groups. I was always a person who acknowledged other people's input and helped them in coping with their shortcomings. Moreover, I have always been given a fair chance to speak, and I myself am a person who is straightforward and honest in speaking, as I like to give true opinions. Before that assessment, I always considered myself a very competent and thoughtful person, but the results of the evaluation shocked me in many different ways, which I lacked in so many areas of cultural competency. Nevertheless, the score that I secured truly reflected the behaviour of no concern about prioritizing the out-group members who seemed to have difficulties

fitting in the larger groups, effectively communicating, and actively engaging with each other.

One major and significant area that needs improvement is cultural knowledge about the attitudes, values, beliefs, and practices that are observed in a certain culture. Being informed of these aspects of cultural competence helps enhance the implementation of strategies to reduce and mitigate the possible cultural differences between the individual and the other people within a work environment. Communication, therefore, forms the essential foundation of interaction that connects people despite challenges and differences in the context of cultural competence.

Communication not only helps interact with each other but also influences an individual's ability to work with their team members in order to achieve a common goal. Moreover, excellent communication skills enhance individuals' understanding of different cultural backgrounds. It also helps in understanding and adopting different styles and methods to improve cultural competence in backgrounds that are culturally sensitive. For instance, I can learn and adopt appropriate body movements and facial expressions that are considered respectful towards others. Developing excellent communication skills would help reduce misunderstandings and misconceptions, and such strategies will enhance cultural competence due to effective interaction. In sum, this assessment proves to be an essential reflection for creating awareness of cultural competency through evaluating personal attitudes and behaviours when interacting with members of the out-group people.

Plans towards Improvement

After evaluating the scores, I have decided to curate a list of several ways that can help improve the shortcomings in my cultural diversity skills. At my current workplace, I plan to use my break time twice a week and sit with my colleagues and professionals to engage in discussion with my fellow team members to get their feedback so that I can improve those skills where I am lacking in the workspace. I have also planned to become more active, diligent, and competent in the inclusion and diversity meetings held inside or outside my organization with different stakeholders to listen to the professionals so that I can also indulge in practical engagement actively. This will help me learn my work environment better and understand how the members of my team from different diversities and cultures actually feel. Starting these strategies next week, I want to learn how to effectively communicate with teammates, interact with professionals, resolve people's queries, and practically engage in the workplace to improve our work environment.

Areas of Improvement for Cultural Diversity

While reviewing the areas of improvement for fostering skills of cultural diversity, I plan some specific goals to accomplish for the coming years to increase my learning experience in the workspace. In order to allow myself to learn and have a better understanding of different cultures for increasing workplace engagement, I would like to incorporate effective education and communication skills by engaging myself in differing groups within the organization to increase my knowledge of different

cultures and enhance engagement with certain groups of people. In addition, language is an important factor that is associated with culture, so to understand the differing beliefs and values of a specific culture, I would recommend incorporating translators in the workplace for differing groups, which would allow for better and more effective communication within the workforce. This would also enhance team engagement as teammates, whether in differing groups, should not feel judged and bothered. So effective communication, engagement, and management can help with that.

Potential Benefits of Focusing on Areas that Need Improvement

As identified, the area that needs improvement is cultural knowledge, which I lack due to not having proper knowledge about various cultures. The development of cultural competence can enhance proper relations between individuals, professionals, or other people, and it can help a person to adopt proper and appropriate behaviour towards people. Cultural knowledge also allows leaders, professionals, and other people in the workplace environment to help individuals who become sensitive to differences in culture. Such differences in a certain culture can hinder the success and collaboration of the team and its assigned tasks. So, by all means, cultural knowledge helps enhance a better understanding of possible potential differences between cultures and individuals that can be mitigated through mutual respect and trust.

Part II

Analysis of Culture, Leadership, and Teamwork

The Relationship between Cultural Competence, Collaboration, and Teamwork

The healthcare system is the network that deals with delivering culturally competent care to the unhealthy population of society. So, leaders in the webbed network of healthcare are responsible for maintaining effective communication and managing better interaction within their teams and teammates. However, there is no strategic way to effectively communicate as every person has their unique way of communicating and interacting with other people, which sometimes varies due to cultural differences. Therefore, it is important to reassess and recognize how people feel and behave in a team environment through their body language and active communication skills, which create numerous opportunities for team participation and engagement. In a healthcare organization, when cultural competence is increased among the members of the staff, they feel more encouraged, satisfied, acknowledged, and prospective, which often results in increasing satisfaction that subsequently leads to retention of work and teams (Johnson, 2008).

By developing a staff in the organization that is culturally competent, organizations can increase productivity, enhance communication skills, and create a sense of satisfaction as well as unity throughout the organizational environment. This strategy would help create a more cohesive workspace within an organization and allow staff members and professionals to interact with each other efficiently with reduced risk of errors and mistakes. Thus, competency in culture is important at both individual and organizational levels as it enhances their ability to deliver and interact with people. The success of a team within a workforce depends on an organization and its people's ability to collaborate through collective problem-solving methods, effective communication, mutual respect, and coordination. It affects the qualities of an effective team by enhancing the sense of loyalty and belonging that depends on the level of competence adopted by the organization collectively and possessed by individuals separately, which leads towards the achievement of an organization's common goal.

Furthermore, effective communication takes place where there are fewer or no barriers, as barriers lead to cultural incompetency, which results in undermining collaboration and interaction among team members. Diversity in teamwork sometimes may be a source of conflict as some individuals consider themselves productive while being confident of their contribution and potential in teamwork, undermining other members' capabilities, which hinders a team's way to success that could be achieved based on the cultural competence of the people involved (Brottman et al., 2020). The individuals in the team, if they are confident of their contribution and potential, can enhance the innovativeness of a team (Smedley et al., 2003). Such team members allow healthcare organizations to adopt strategies to encourage individuals to interact effectively with each other with the goal of learning and assisting each other.

The Distinction between Cultural Awareness, Cultural Knowledge, Cultural Competence, and Cultural Sensitivity

The leaders of healthcare organizations are responsible for distinguishing between cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence to achieve the goal of a more robust self-reported teamwork environment in the workforce. The term cultural knowledge pertains to the beliefs, history, morals, attitudes, and behaviours of the chief cultural characteristics of the ethnic groups. Cultural awareness refers to the understanding of one group by another while enforcing the notion of changing and challenging cultural attitudes and being open to differences in others' cultures. Cultural sensitivity is the term that refers to understanding the differences between cultures without assigning characteristics and values to the cultural differences. Lastly, cultural competence pertains to the idea of bringing together anything and everything that can add effectiveness to cultural aspects that help work effectively in cross-cultural settings in order to produce better outcomes. It is culturally significant for an individual in the healthcare organization and its leader to know and understand each respective field, including cultural barriers and ways to build better relationships. In this regard, cultural competency serves as the foundational stone to respect and appreciate others who have differing attitudes and values in a team (Allensworth-Davies

et al., 2007).

Misconceptions in Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Due to Cultural Differences

Influential leaders in healthcare organizations use both verbal and non-verbal ways to effectively communicate in order to build trust, rapport, and symbolic communication in a work environment. They communicate through words as well as actions to unite individuals through a shared vision and collaborative strategic conversations. Some use non-verbal communication through facial expressions, gestures, interpersonal distances, and eye contact, depending on the peculiarities of a certain culture. For instance, handshakes in Russia are considered impolite and a sign of bad omen, but in the United States, handshakes mean parting or meeting with someone. Without appropriate knowledge and understanding of verbal and non-verbal behaviour, someone's communication can be misinterpreted, which can lead to discrimination, or someone's body movements can lead to prejudice. A person with folded arms and tapping feet may be a sign of him impatiently waiting for someone. It is, however, a common perception that workspace communication is often experienced through non-verbal means of communication, which helps others be aware of the emotions of the other person. In a teamwork scenario, a leader can communicate with a culturally diverse team with differing attitudes, values, and tolerances through varying avenues such as tone, words, mood, and actions through the non-verbal signs and expressions a leader gives to other people during a meeting. For instance, some cultures around the world take offence to others raising their voice during a meeting or gathering.

Conclusion

To be a successful and competent leader in the healthcare organization, understanding cultural differences to keep up with the cultural competency in today's world is not only significant but vital for the success of the organization as well as the prospects of the teammates. A leader with successful leadership skills should be well-versed in effective communication and social interactions. Therefore, it is vitally significant for a leadership that is culturally diverse in its actions and operations to not only develop effective verbal communication skills for their staff members through learning multiple languages but also strengthen their non-verbal communication skills through the intended expressions for their diverse teammates.

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