RACE, ETHNICITY AND LANGUAGE DATA COLLECTION

CANS Conference Call

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- **Nearly 1/4 of Massachusetts children are either immigrants or children of immigrants.**
- **Massachusetts has the 7th largest immigrant population in the U.S.**
- **Over 110 languages spoken**

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What is the purpose of collecting information on race, ethnicity and language?

- **To know who we serve and train those who serve them**
- **To ensure that our services are accessible and best care possible**
- **To improve services for all**
- **To plan services in order to address unmet needs**
- **To comply with accreditation and standards of care**

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"How do we collect racial, ethnic and language information about our clients?"

- **Self-reporting, or self-identification, is the preferred method for collecting data on race, ethnicity and language.**
- ***Give three or four examples with the questions***

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- **If they are still not sure, offering the member the printed list of options for race, ethnicity and language tables (available on the CBHI website) may help her / him make a choice.**

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First ask about *ETHNICITY* --

An Ethnic Group, or Ethnicity, is defined as a group of people who are connected by a common national origin, history, language, customs and cultural experiences.

- **On Ethnicity: *"How would you identify your ethnicity?"* and give examples Vietnamese, Puerto Rican, Brazilian, Irish.**
- **Or use words like background, ancestry, heritage, culture or sometimes the country where they were born as prompt.**

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- **On Race: *"How would you identify your race?"***
  The federal government officially designates five broad racial groups: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, White.

- **In addition ask the client to identify himself/herself Hispanic/Latino/Black, Hispanic/Latino/White, Hispanic/Latino/Other*.**

* MDPH procedures

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On Race:

Hispanic/Latino/Black

A person having origins in any of the black racial groups *AND* who is of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin.

Hispanic/Latino/White

A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa, *AND* who is of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin.

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LANGUAGE

- **What is the difference between asking for "primary" language and preferred" language? Why is it important?**

The distinction is made as an acknowledgement that even though a client may be "fluent" in one language, she or he may prefer to use another for a variety of reasons.

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- ***Primary Language***

This is the language preferred by the child or youth.

- ***Language at Home***

This is the language preferred by the caretaker(s) of the child or youth. For youth living independently, this should be the same as the primary language.

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Massachusetts cities and towns with high percentages of families reporting that English is NOT their primary language:

Lawrence	**80.10%**
Holyoke	**53.0%**
Somerville	**31.40%**
Fall River	**29.20%**
Worcester	**24.70%**

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- **If a client identifies him or herself as belonging to a race, ethnic or language group that does not appear in the tables, what do I do? Select *"Other."***

- **Does not want to self-identify with a particular race or ethnic group, what do I do? Select *"Chooses not to self-identify."***

- **Identifies him or herself with more than one race, ethnicity or language, what do I do? Select only one at this time***

*Future version will allow the selection of more than one race, ethnicity and language.

Client Questions / Concerns - Samples and Responses

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Interview Example #1:

Client: "I'm Ukrainian. We came here in 1998."

The new data fields in the CBHI Virtual Gateway will allow for the selection of a specific response such as "Ukrainian."

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Interview Example #2:

Client: "I'm mixed -- my mother is Cuban-Puerto Rican, and my father is Irish-American. Do you have a category for that?"

The new data fields in the CBHI Virtual Gateway would allow this respondent to choose either:

"Puerto Rican" or "Irish" or "American" or "Other" *

***Future version will allow the selection of more than one race, ethnicity and language.**

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Interview Example #3:

Client: "Can't you tell by looking at me?"

Possible response:

"Well, usually I can. But sometimes I'm wrong, so we think it's better to let people tell us."

Hasnain-Wynia, R. Pierce, D. *A Toolkit for Collecting Race, Ethnicity, and Primary Language Information from Patients*. The Health Research and Educational Trust. February, 2005.

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Interview Example #4:

Client: "I'm American. Of course, if you go back in my family's history, they came here from Italy in the 1940's, but we've been here ever since. I'm just plain old American, as far as I'm concerned."

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NOTE:

The new data fields in the CBHI Virtual Gateway include a field for "American."

There are many reasons people may select "American" as their ancestry, including the length of time their family has been here, or the fact that they have such mixed backgrounds that they do not identify with any particular group.

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Interview Example #6:

Client: "It's none of your business."

Possible response:
"I'll put down that you choose not to self-identity which is fine."

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Interview Example #5:

Client: "I'm human."

Possible response:

"Is that your way of saying that you don't want to answer the question? If so, I can say that you choose not to self-identity"

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Interview Example #7:

Client: "Who looks at this?"

Possible response:

"The only people who see this information are those involved in providing or paying for your care and treatment, and people involved in planning, monitoring and improving the way services are delivered.

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Interview Example #8:

Client: "Are you trying to find out if I'm a U.S. citizen?"

Possible response:

"No, definitely not! Also, you should know that the confidentiality of what you say is protected by law."

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Where can I get more information on data collection and/or other issues relevant to multicultural populations?

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Office of Multicultural Affairs:

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