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1. PURPOSE

To ensure that all staff working in healthcare settings are aware and understand that culture and language have a considerable impact on how patients access and respond to healthcare services. This policy states that culturally effective and sensitive healthcare is important and critical for delivering quality healthcare and for achieving positive health outcomes.

Healthcare providers working in the UAE are diverse and represent a wide range of cultural and religious backgrounds. It is important that these providers are aware of cultural appropriateness; norms; religious values and beliefs; and traditions of the UAE in order to provide effective and culturally sensitive healthcare services to the population of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Also, due to the diversity of the residents in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, there is disparity in cultural attributes between healthcare professionals and their patients and patients' families or guardians and requires educational interventions to ensure that healthcare professionals are able to provide culturally effective care to a diverse patient population. Cultural attributes of the population/residents are not limited to race and nationality but also include ethnicity, language, religion, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status. Therefore, this Policy mandates that all healthcare facilities' staff need to be culturally sensitive and deliver culturally competent healthcare for the population residing in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. Health authority Abu Dhabi (HAAD) aims to ensure that patients have access to culturally sensitive and competent quality healthcare with consideration of the diverse, multicultural, multi lingual, and range of socioeconomic populations residing in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi;
- 2.2. HAAD advocates that cultural and religious values of UAE are not compromised during the healthcare service delivery but are integrated into the system of care so as to provide culturally sensitive and competent healthcare services;
- 2.3. HAAD requires providers to recognise the cultural diversity and religious beliefs of the multinational community served in healthcare facilities, and to ensure that all are treated with dignity, respect, sensitivity, and with consideration of appropriate cultural norms and traditions;
- 2.4. HAAD mandates and advocates that providers recruit and retain qualified, diverse and culturally competent administrative, clinical, and support staff that are trained and qualified to address the needs of the diverse communities served by all healthcare facilities in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi;

- 2.5. HAAD identifies five essential elements that contribute to a system's ability to become more culturally competent. The system should (i) value diversity, (ii) have the capacity for cultural self-assessment, (iii) be conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact, (iv) institutionalize cultural knowledge, and (v) develop programs and services that reflect an understanding of diversity between and within cultures. These five elements must be manifested in every level of the service delivery system. They must be reflected in attitudes, structures, policies, and services.
- 2.6. HAAD mandates that based on the five essential elements, healthcare providers develop a comprehensive management strategy in healthcare facilities to address culturally and linguistically appropriate services, including strategic goals, plans, policies and procedures, and designate staff to be responsible for implementation and education of other staff.

3. SCOPE

All staff working in healthcare settings in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi follow and deliver healthcare with cultural competency and awareness according to the value and tradition of UAE and as per its diverse resident population.

4. TARGET AUDIENCE

Staff of HAAD licensed healthcare facilities in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi

5. RESPONSIBILITY

HAAD requires that the management of the healthcare facility is responsible and accountable to ensure that the organization achieves the intent of this policy and promotes and supports the attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and skills necessary for staff to work respectfully and effectively with patients and with each other in a culturally diverse work environment. All healthcare employers and employees shall be responsible for abiding by and complying with this policy.

6. PROCEDURE

- 6.1. HAAD requires that all healthcare facilities provide and facilitate ongoing education and training for administrative, clinical, and support staff in culturally sensitive and linguistically competent service delivery;
- 6.2. HAAD mandates that all new staff attend an orientation process regarding acceptable norms and cultural issues in the UAE and follow accordingly in the healthcare practice. Cultural, traditional and religious values of UAE are inherent parts of the society and must be integrated and followed in all the healthcare settings taking into consideration gender, religion, and family values.
- 6.3. Healthcare facilities must prepare an annual progress report that documents the organizations' development in improving staff awareness and the implementation of "Culturally and Linguistically" appropriate Healthcare services; the report must identify updated information on programs in development, staffing, and resources required.
- 6.4. HAAD encourages healthcare facilities to establish formal mechanisms for community and patient involvement to ensure that the healthcare facility's policies and procedures, service delivery, treatment planning, operations, and training are sensitive to the culture of the UAE and the community served;
- 6.5. HAAD advocates access to bilingual staff in all health care facilities;
- 6.6. HAAD advocates appropriate dress code/uniform of the healthcare providers;
- 6.7. HAAD mandates that all staff demonstrate culturally sensitive conduct during the

- patient's journey in the health care system;
- 6.8. HAAD requires that interpretation services be available to all patients, their families and visitors who have limited proficiency in the English or Arabic language;
 - 6.9. Healthcare facilities are responsible to ensure the efficiency and the effectiveness of the translator services provided and are relevant to clinical or non-clinical encounters;
 - 6.10. HAAD mandates that healthcare facilities provide oral and written notices and patient information in Arabic and English languages, including translated signs at key point of contact for patients, their families and other visitors;
 - 6.11. Healthcare facilities must ensure that IT/HIS developments include a client profile within the management information system database that documents the clients' primary spoken language and self-identified race/ethnicity. This information is to be recorded in any patient records used by provider staff;
 - 6.12. HAAD requires healthcare facilities to use a variety of methods to collect and report accurate demographic, cultural, epidemiological and clinical outcome data for racial and ethnic groups in the service area; thereby informing the healthcare administration and management for the health planning process for the ethnic/cultural needs, resources, and assets of the surrounding community;
 - 6.13. HAAD requires healthcare facilities to develop programs to undertake ongoing organizational self-assessments of cultural and linguistic competence, and integrate measures of access, satisfaction, quality, and outcomes for culture and linguistic sensitivity to other internal audits and performance improvement programs;
 - 6.14. Healthcare facilities must comply with the HAAD policies, regulations and procedures to address ethical and legal conflicts in health care delivery and complaints or grievances by patients and staff about unfair, culturally insensitive or discriminatory treatment or difficulty in accessing services, or denial of services;
 - 6.15. When there is conflict with cross cultural, traditional and religious issues, the healthcare facility must follow the rules and regulations as per the Federal Laws and the Regulations as set up by the Government of Emirate of Abu Dhabi and HAAD;
 - 6.16. HAAD will monitor the implementation of this policy through regular inspection and audits.

7. DEFINITION AND ABBREVIATIONS

Culture	The word culture implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group. Culture often is referred to as the totality of ways being passed on from generation to generation.
Value	Dignity and Worth of the Person and the Ethical Principle: Health care workers should respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person. This value states that health care workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.
Competence	The word competence implies having the capacity to function effectively within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior defined by the group.
Cultural Competence	<p>Cultural competence refers to the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.</p> <p>Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals and enable the system, agency, or professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.</p> <p>Operationally defined, cultural competence is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services, thereby producing better outcomes. Competence in cross-cultural functioning means learning new patterns of behavior and effectively applying them in appropriate settings.</p>
Self-Awareness	Health care workers develop an understanding of their own personal and cultural values and beliefs as a first step in appreciating the importance of multicultural identities in the lives of people.
Cross-Cultural Knowledge	Health care workers have and continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding about the history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions of major client groups served.
Cultural Sensitivity	Cultural sensitivity means being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on values, learning, and behavior. Components of cultural sensitivity includes valuing and recognizing the importance of one's own cultures, value diversity, realizing that cultural diversity will affect an individual's communication and participation in education in various ways. A willingness to adapt one's communication and behaviors to be compatible with another cultural norm. A willingness to learn about traditions and characteristics of other cultures.