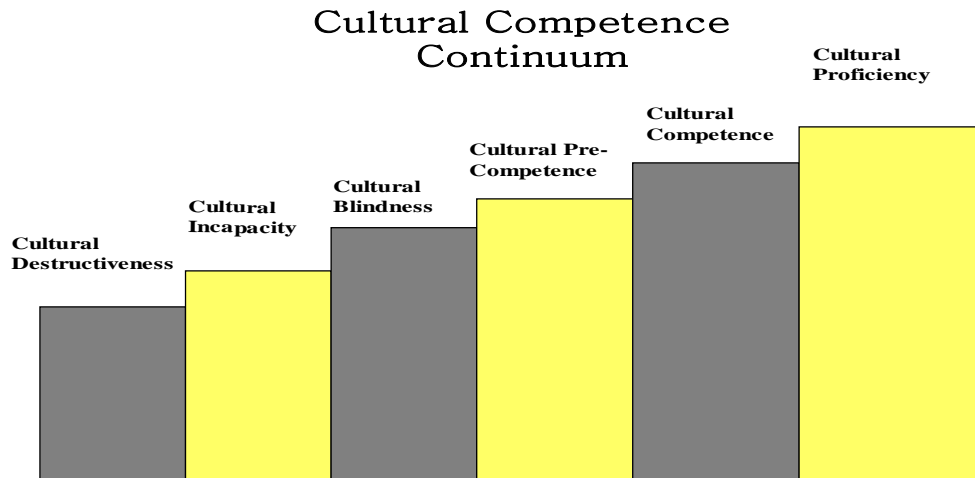


## Cultural Competence Continuum

In this month's edition of the *Watercooler*, we will discuss a cultural competence continuum that was developed to better understand the developmental process of cultural competence on the individual and organization levels. An organization or individual will typically move from left to right. Different experiences and situations may result in movement from right to left. As an individual and as an organization, we should always strive toward cultural proficiency. Take a moment to review the continuum and assess where you are. You may find that you are between points of the continuum, at a place where you are pleased, or at a place where you wish you were not. Nevertheless, there is value in conducting an informal self-assessment. This allows each individual and organization to have a starting point.



<http://www.med.umich.edu/multicultural/ccp/basic.htm#continuum>

**Cultural Destructiveness** acknowledges only one way of being and purposefully denies or outlaws any other cultural approaches. This is the most negative end of the continuum. Examples include forbidding the use of primary language. One of the most extreme examples is cultural genocide.

**Cultural Incapacity** supports the concept of separate but equal; marked by an inability to deal personally with multiple approaches but a willingness to accept their existence elsewhere. This system or individual is extremely bias.

**Cultural Blindness** fosters an assumption that people are all basically alike, so what works with members of one culture should work within all other cultures. Values and behaviors of the dominant culture are presumed to be universally applicable and beneficial.

**Cultural Pre-Competence** encourages learning and understanding of new ideas and solutions to improve performance or services. There is a desire to provide fair and equitable treatment with appropriate cultural sensitivity. There may be a level of frustration because the person, or organization, does not know exactly what is possible or how to proceed.

**Cultural Competence** involves actively seeking advice and consultation. It is a commitment to incorporating new knowledge and experiences into a wider range of practice. It is acceptance and respect for difference, continuing self-assessment regarding culture, careful attention to the dynamics of difference, continuous expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, and a variety of adaptations to belief system, policies, and practices.

**Cultural Proficiency** involves holding cultural differences and diversity in the highest esteem, pro-activity regarding cultural differences, and promotion of improved cultural relations among diverse groups. There is a process of formally and informally increasing the knowledge of others and challenging or correcting inappropriate remarks and comments.