

The Cultural Competence of Early Intervention Occupational Therapists

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Background

- U.S. population is diversifying at a greater rate than OT profession¹
- Previous research supports cultural competence as an effective means to mitigate health disparities²
- Cultural competence (CC) includes diversity, awareness, sensitivity, and behaviors³

Research Aims: 1) Determine specific CC behaviors used by EI OTs 2) Find if CC differed between demographic subgroups

Methods

- **Survey design:** Cultural Competence Assessment (CCA) and demographics questionnaire completed online
- **Participants:** 53 U.S., EI OTs. Mean age 39 years, 100% female, 86% Caucasian
- **Data Analysis:** descriptive statistics; independent samples t-tests of subgroups (two-tailed, alpha = 0.05)

Results

Descriptive Statistics: Behaviors

Most Endorsed Cultural Competence Behaviors

	N	M	SD
I find ways to adapt my services to client and family cultural preferences	53	2.63	0.60
Even if I know about a person's culture, I assess their personal preferences for care	53	2.62	0.50
I act to remove obstacles for people of different cultures when clients identify them to me	53	2.56	0.60

Least Endorsed Cultural Competence Behaviors

	N	M	SD
I have resource books and other materials available to help me learn about clients and families from different cultures	51	1.06	0.88
I document cultural assessments	26	0.96	1.08
I include cultural assessment when I do client or family evaluations	35	0.91	1.04

Inferential Statistics: Demographic & Cultural Competence

There was a *significant* relationship between:

- **Years of experience** and CC ($t(50)=2.07, p=0.04$)
- **Cultural competence training** and cultural competence ($t(46)=2.19, p=0.03$)

There was *not a significant* relationship between:

- **Educational attainment** and cultural competence ($t(50)=1.31, p=0.20$)
- **Speaking client native language** and cultural competence ($t(50)=1.20, p=0.24$)

Discussion

- Participants endorsed behaviors that align with therapeutic use of self
- Least endorsed behaviors point to instrument lack of specificity to OT
- Years of experience and cultural competence training findings are congruent with the provider's ongoing development of cultural competence skills

Implications for OT/OS

- Continued educational emphasis on cultural competence
- Need to develop OT-specific formative and summative measures

References

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