

NIATx and Cultural Responsiveness.

Exploring the CLAS Standards through the NIATx Foundation CLAS Assessment

In recent years NIATx has focused on a What-How strategy:

A range of evidence-based practices and improvement agendas have provided the “What” (What we want to implement or improve.)

The NIATx improvement model has provided the “How”. (How we can effectively implement or improve it.)

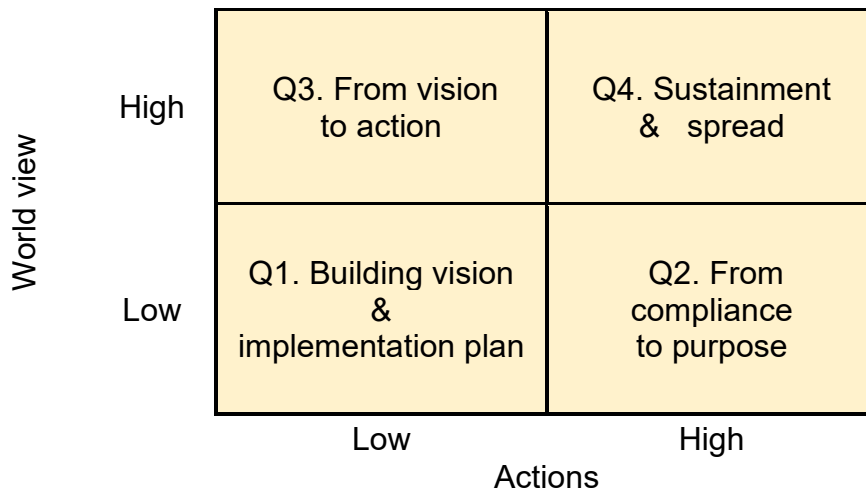
Using this model NIATx has been linked to a range of practices, and has found success supporting states, provider systems and organizations to effectively implement and improve a range of practices. These have included motivational interviewing, substance use screening, prevention, peer services, contingency management, regulatory compliance, family engagement, clinic services, and a wide array of other practices across a spectrum of health and human services.

A powerful “What for the NIATx How that has emerged is organizational and systemic efforts to improve Cultural Responsiveness.

CR includes efforts to understand and engage the wide array of cultural attributes that individuals and groups bring to the service environment. This includes service staff, and customers such as service recipients and other community partners. These cultural features can include language, behaviors, beliefs, values and customs. A focus on culture tends to create a broader dialogue beyond race and ethnicity, including cultural differences found in different regions, generations, urban and rural differences, gender and sexual orientation, faith communities, etc.

Much energy is being focused on CR right now as SAMHSA promotes the National CLAS Standards, a framework for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in health and health care. The 15 action steps of CLAS focus on Advancing health equity, eliminating disparities, and improving service quality.

NIATx Foundation has developed a CLAS Assessment. The NFCA includes multiple subscales and can be delivered to a team or a broader system to determine the perspectives and needs related to CLAS. Participants responses to the web-based survey result in scores that represent the four quadrants below, including low or high scores related to the organization’s “world view” and low or high scores related to the organizations “actions” related to CLAS.



The Prevention Action Alliance recently collaborated with the NIATx Foundation to undertake the NIATx Foundation CLAS Assessment (NFCA) and partook in a training program focused on Cultural Responsiveness and NIATx process improvement model, offered by the Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC). This initiative began with the Ohio cohort examining the variety of cultural factors that complement their approach with the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) in an introductory meeting. Following this, the cohort engaged in a two-day summit, interacting with PTTC experts specializing in CLAS/Culture and Process Improvement. After the summit, the Ohio group gained a comprehensive understanding of their cultural perspectives and devised strategies to enhance their prevention efforts. They also heightened their recognition of the vast cultural diversity within their community. Post-summit, the cohort completed the NFCA and reconvened to celebrate their transformative projects and analyze the assessment outcomes. This six-month collaboration culminated in a coaching session to clarify the assessment results and discuss ongoing improvements with their prevention services, the development of implementation tactics and change strategies, aiming to improve engagement with their respective communities.