



H E A L T H C A R E  
E M E R G E N C Y  
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# Cultural Adaptation in Mass Casualty Incident Response

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# Why?

- ▶ Are there different cultures in your community? Everyone has different cultures in their jurisdiction.
- ▶ You must plan for everyone, not just 98% of the population.



# Cultures

## ▶ Definition of Culture:

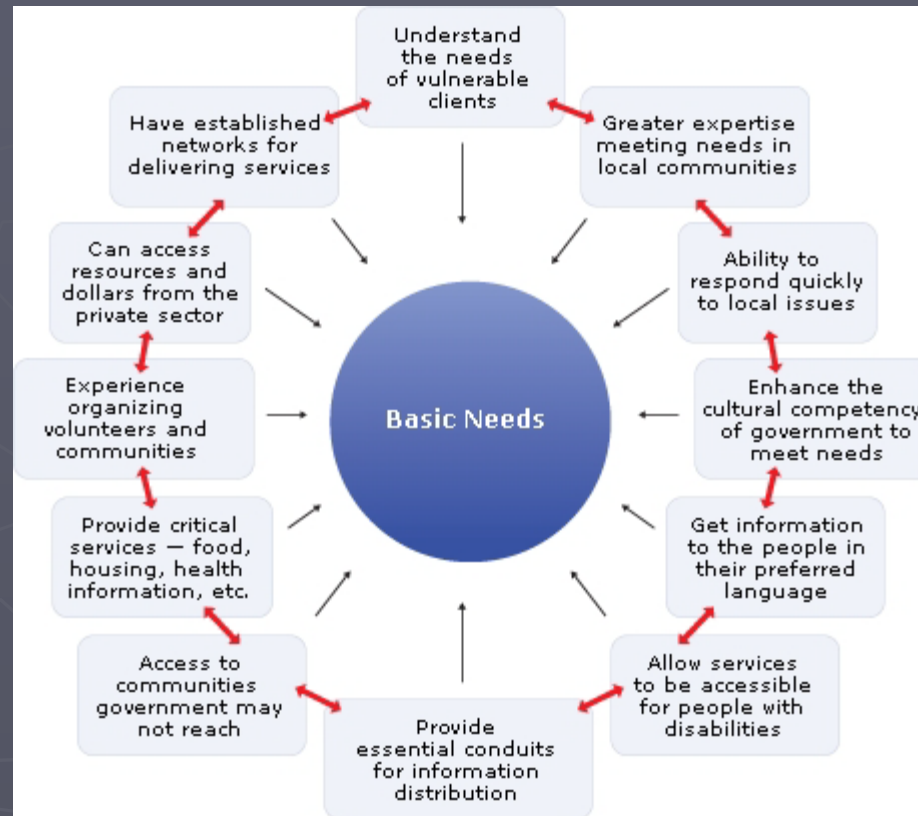
- Too many to choose from
- Webster's Dictionary has (6)
- Best summary:
  - ▶ Shared value of norms and attitudes amongst a group of people.
  - ▶ Do people with Functional and Accessible Needs live in a culture of their own????

# Cultures

- ▶ Are all Cultures Ethnic in origin?



# Cultural Needs Wheel



# Lessons Learned

- ▶ In November 2008, large scale drive thru flu clinic received widespread praise for vaccinating large segment of population.
- ▶ Event was planned using ICS and HSEEP recommendations. 99% of the population planned for, but I failed miserably as PSC when both a hard of hearing citizen and a family who only spoke Portuguese came to the dispensing site.
- ▶ There was no interpreters or link with the Cape Organization for the Rights of the Disabled (CORD) in place. The event was viewed by many within the command structure as a failure.
  - Even though we vaccinated 2000 people, we failed 5 people and that was the real lesson learned.

# Lessons Learned (Colville)

- ▶ Reservations are Sovereign lands, do not force CDC regulations with tribal members. (ex: H1N1)
- ▶ Corrections Commander selected as IC for the drive thru distribution.
- ▶ Selection of Incident Commander for Tribal Nations may be different than what we are used to.
- ▶ Do not touch anything on the sacred grounds including trash, very disrespectful. Instead of being helpful I was being disrespectful.



# Cultural Lookout

- ▶ Individual placed on Lookout (LO) list who can bridge the culture with Emergency Management.
- ▶ Many agencies can be the Cultural Lookout.
  - US Office of Minority Health
  - US Office of Border Health
  - US Commerce Dept (Census)
  - County Health / Nursing
  - Social Workers
  - School Districts
  - Religious Organizations
  - Advocacy Groups





# Cultural Lookout



- ▶ Adopt the old US Forest Service model of fire lookout towers.
- ▶ Constantly looking for small fires to extinguish before they get large.
- ▶ Same concept with Cultural Lookouts within your community.



# Culture, Death & Mass Casualty Management

- ▶ Research how different cultures deal with death. If your communities have several cultures and several cultural specific funeral homes, are they identified and linked in the Mass Fatality plan?
- ▶ Approach your Cultural Lookouts and ask about end of life planning and protocols.



# Culture, Death & Mass Casualty Management

- ▶ How is your state set up for Mass Fatality management and investigations?
- ▶ Know the difference between a Medical Examiner and a Coroner and the inherit cultures within each.



# Workplace Culture and Mass Casualty Management

- ▶ Have a COOP plan ready for those high impact events that affects a common stakeholder location.
  - Ex: School bus accident in the community where the hospital resides. Several workers could be affected.
  - Have CISM ready for both first responders and family members.
- ▶ Be mindful of HIPAA violations within the workplace as a result of the mass casualty incident. Have a information lockdown plan in place.
- ▶ Be mindful of Social Media impact on the event (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace) for employees.
  - Venting of incident management / pro or con
  - Assessing blame and revealing of incident details

# Hand Symbol Culture Exercise

- ▶ President George W. Bush gives the “Hook Em Horns” hand gesture while in Italy to the Italian Prime Minister.
- ▶ Does anyone know what that means in Italian culture?



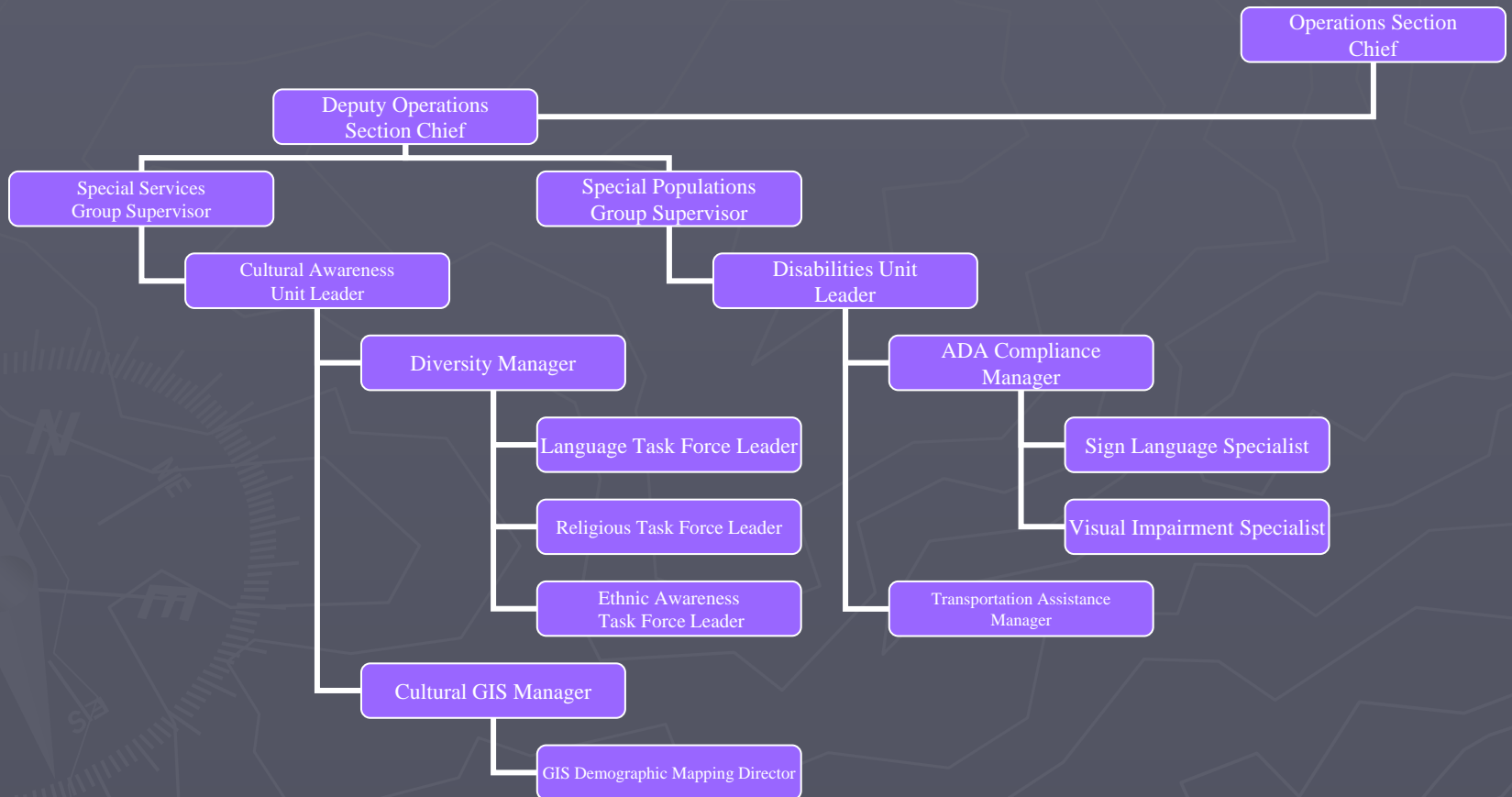
# Hand Symbol Culture Exercise

“Your Wife is  
Cheating on  
you”

Always be careful with  
hand gestures and  
cultures.



# Culture and ICS





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Type I OSC, SOFR, LOFR  
Colville TOSHA / Mt. Tolman Fire Department



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