The population of Asian Americans has increased dramatically in the United States, now making up 9.7% of the United States’ population. This increase heightens the importance of culturally responsive support strategies for Asian American individuals with disabilities and their families. Due to lack of empirical studies, the literature is unclear as to whether or not person-centered planning is culturally appropriate for Asian American individuals with disabilities and their families. This article advances clarification through a comparison of the predominant core values of person-centered planning and the core Asian American cultural values. While findings indicate there is some consistency between person-centered planning and Asian American values, a lack of congruence is even more apparent. Specific modifications may enhance the appropriateness of person-centered planning for Asian American families.

TIPS

- Offer Asian American families a choice between traditional service plans and person-centered planning.

- Be knowledgeable about Asian Americans’ cultural values, the family’s level of acculturation, the impact of the socioeconomic status on the family’s resources, and the parents’ educational expectations and goals for their children with disabilities.

- Be sensitive to the family’s financial and employment situation by arranging convenient meeting times for the family and arranging transportation or childcare if needed.
TIPS cont.

- Provide an interpreter for all interactions if the family’s English skills are limited.
- Since the Asian American family system is typically patriarchal, enable the person with the most authority in the family to speak first and address all questions initially towards that person.

KEY FINDINGS

- The population of Asian Americans has increased dramatically in the United States over the past decade, making up 9.7% of the United States’ population.
- Although Asian American groups are diverse between and within groups, there is a common set of shared values that tie all of the groups together including group orientation, strong family ties and respect for authority.
- Three key family values of Asian Americans are the importance of the extended family system, hierarchical/patriarchal family relationships, and high expectations for children’s behavior.
- Asian American families have distinct beliefs about why children are born with disabilities that stem from cultural, spiritual and/or religious beliefs. These beliefs may affect the family’s utilization of intervention services.
- In recent years, person-centered planning has been used to organize and guide life changes for persons with disabilities towards community inclusion by utilizing the support of friends, family members, and community resources.
- Person-centered planning values include the desires and preferences of an individual with a disability and collaboration between individuals committed to the individual.
- Desired outcomes of person-centered planning include self-determination and the development of a shared positive view of the focus person with the disability.
- One way to establish the cultural responsiveness of person-centered planning for Asian American families is to compare the predominant core values of person-centered planning with the cultural values of Asian Americans. While some compatibility does exist between the values of person-centered planning and Asian Americans, conflicting values are more apparent.
KEY FINDINGS

 Cultural values of Asian American families that are consistent with core values of person-centered planning are family harmony and extended family system, interdependence and family obligations, and respect for elders and authority figures.

 Cultural values of Asian American families that conflict with the core values of person-centered planning are pride, less rigid expectations for their children with disabilities, hierarchical family systems, family cohesion, and deference to professional knowledge.

 The appropriateness and successful implementation of person-centered planning for Asian American families can be enhanced with specific modifications. These modifications are grouped into three broad categories: (a) establishing relationships, (b) meeting logistics, and (c) communicating during the meeting.

 Establishing relationships: Working effectively with Asian American families requires establishing credibility and rapport by being knowledgeable and respectful of their family situations and cultural priorities.

 Meeting logistics: Arrange meeting times and locations that are convenient for the family. Provide an interpreter when needed.

 Communicating during meetings: Being aware of Asian American communication styles reduces the chance of offending family members or producing conflict in the family during planning meetings.

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