

*A Class about C.L.A.S*

# Discussion Guide

*Provided by*  
Utah Department of Health  
**Office of Health Disparities**

This discussion guide is intended to spark conversation about how C.L.A.S. Standards can be implemented by a health organization.

Utah Department of Health  
Office of Health Disparities

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# Introduction

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This discussion guide is intended to promote conversation about the video *A Class about C.L.A.S.* and how CLAS Standards can be implemented in a health program, clinic or health organization. The goal of CLAS Standards is to implement the following principal standard:

### *The Principal Standard*

Provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.

## Terms to know

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Before we get started, there are some terms used that should be defined:

Definitions	
<b>Culturally and linguistically appropriate services</b>	Services provided that take into account the language, culture and literacy level of clients or targeted population.
<b>Health</b>	An individual's physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being.
<b>Culture</b>	Racial, ethnic and linguistic groups, as well as geographical, religious and spiritual, biological and sociological characteristics
<b>Policy</b>	Regulations, laws, rules, protocols and procedures that govern how health care or health programs are delivered. Policies may include hiring practices and venues for posting job opportunities.
<b>Policy scan</b>	Evaluates the current state of operations in an organization. It may also include looking at organization mission and vision statements, to assess the values and goals of the organization and see if processes match stated values and goals.
<b>Service population</b>	A particular group of people that is identified as the intended recipient of a product, service or campaign. May also be known as service area or target population.

## A Class about C.L.A.S.

### **Let's start a discussion!**

It may be helpful to assess how familiar employees are with CLAS standards. Starting a meaningful conversation can be a definitive step that organizations can take to understand what employees know and how they feel about implementing CLAS into their daily work processes.

[View Introduction](#)

#### [Introduction: A Class About C.L.A.S.](#)

*“Our population here in Utah is becoming more diverse. It's evident in every aspect of our community and in our health care system.”*

*A Class About Class*

View the *Introduction* section of *A Class About C.L.A.S.* Then consider the suggested questions below.

### **Suggested questions:**

- Have you heard of CLAS Standards or its concepts?
- Think about your own experiences in your daily life and at your job. Do you think that the concepts of CLAS Standards are or would be helpful?
- Do you think implementing CLAS Standards would benefit our clients? Our organization?

[View Theme One](#)

#### [Governance, Leadership, and Workforce](#)

*“There is incredible value in the people who come from various backgrounds who work in the organization.”*

*Dr. Marc Babitz, Utah Department of Health*

View the *Theme One* section of *A Class About C.L.A.S.* Then consider the suggested questions below.

Ask employees, especially those in leadership in your organization, to think about everyday processes and about what guides those processes.

## A Class about C.L.A.S.

### Suggested questions:

- Think about your daily job. Think about our mission statement. In what ways does your work contribute to that mission?
- In what ways can your daily work improve upon our mission?
- What policies guide your work processes?
- How do we recruit new employees?
- Does our staff reflect our service population?

### Suggested activities:

- Perform a policy scan of your organizations' policies. It may include looking at your organization's mission and vision statement, to assess its values and goals and analyze whether processes match stated values and goals.
- Perform a step-by-step analysis of processes to determine what can be improved.
- Develop a flow chart of processes.

[View Theme Two](#)

### Communication and Language Assistance

*"If a client can come and receive the services they need, then they're going to come back and tell their friends, and that builds our clientele so it works for both us and the client."*

Teresa Smith, Davis County Health Department

View the *Theme Two* section of *A Class About C.L.A.S.* Then consider the suggested questions below.

Ask employees, especially those at the front desk or at initial points of contact at your organization, to think about their interactions with clients.

### Suggested questions:

- Think about the clients that we serve. What are the primary communication issues that they face? What are the communication issues that you face?
- What language(s) do our clients speak?
- If you came across a client that spoke a language you couldn't identify, do you have a way to identify a language spoken by a client?

## A Class about C.L.A.S.

- How do you help clients when they don't understand the services we are trying to provide?
- Who provides written and/or verbal instructions to clients? Are they easy to understand?

### Suggested activities:

- Review your current practices, tools and training used to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services.
- Advise providers and staff who schedule or operate on a schedule that using interpreters will make a visit or client encounter longer. Encourage them to plan accordingly.
- Advise staff that it often takes longer to get the right interpreter to a visit.
- Check your interpretation services. Please note that telephone interpreters should not be the sole source of interpretation services for a provider/clinic or health program.
- Consider gender preference of interpreters and service providers.
- Encourage policy development to assess and document the quality of interpreters used and their compliance to standards.

[View Theme Three](#)

### Engagement, Continuous Improvement and Accountability

*“It's very important that we listen.”*

Luis Garza, Comunidades Unidas

View the *Theme Three* section of *A Class About C.L.A.S.* Then consider the suggested questions below.

Ask employees to identify your organization's service population. Ask them to think about the clients they usually encounter.

### Suggested questions:

- Who is the targeted population of our organization?
- Are they represented among clients that we currently serve?
- What does community engagement mean to you?
- What are the primary health concerns of our service population?
- What type of data do we collect?
- How are we using the data?
- Does the data collected help us to provide better services?

## A Class about C.L.A.S.

### Suggested activities:

- Clearly identify your target population.
- Determine who you serve and whom you would like to serve.
- Check your organization's data collection and determine whether you have enough information to serve your targeted population.
- Make a list of all of your current partners and stakeholders. Determine whether there are individuals or organizations who should be added to the list.
- Define community engagement. Determine what type and/or level of community engagement may be the most beneficial to you and your service population. ( i.e. Individuals from target population, community-based or faith-based organizations who serve your target population, public or private institutions that also provide services to your target population.)

[View Summary](#)

[Summary](#)

*“The bottom line is that if we are going to move forward in the world, we need to have a system in place where everyone feels comfortable.”*

Sarah Simons, Utah County Health Department

View the *Summary* section of *A Class About C.L.A.S.* Then consider the suggested questions below.

### Suggested questions:

- Think about a time when the services provided were exactly what our client needed. What happened? Outline the steps that made this service possible.
- Think about a time when the services provided did not meet the client's need. What happened? What was missing?

### Suggested activities:

- Reiterate that CLAS services will help clients take part in and maintain their own health.
- Define empathy and ways to build empathy.
- Create a plan to implement CLAS in a systematic and incremental way.
- Create an evaluation based on information from this discussion to identify which areas may need targeting and when.
- Evaluate your efforts to see how implementation is going with periodic assessments.

## A Class about C.L.A.S.

### What now?

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There are many resources to consult and utilize to provide the best possible services to your service population.

View the [National C.L.A.S. Standards](#) along with many helpful resources at the [Think Cultural Health](#) website.

The Office of Health Disparities has also developed additional resources that may help you to implement CLAS in your organization.

- [CLAS Implementation Toolkit](#) has been developed for Utah Department of Health and local health department agencies and programs.
- [Workforce Diversity Fact Sheet](#) provides specific information about diversifying your workforce.
- [Interpretation Toolkit](#) provides guidance to state and local health department personnel through step-by-step procedures to promote accurate and effective interpretation processes.
- [Translation Toolkit](#) and [Manual](#) provides detailed explanations of how organizations can achieve high quality written translations.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health has training resources. Many include Continuing Education Units (CEU) for health professionals.

- Physician's Practical Guide to CC <https://cccm.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/>
- Culturally Competent Nursing Care <https://ccnm.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/>
- Cultural Competence for Disaster Preparedness and Crisis <https://cccdpcr.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/>
- Cultural Competence for Oral Health Professionals <https://oralhealth.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/>

National CLAS Standards and the Joint Commission Accreditation Requirements

- [CLAS/TJC Hospital Crosswalk](#) and [CLAS/TJC Ambulatory Health Care Crosswalk](#). These crosswalks compare CLAS Standards to The Joint Commission's 2015 Standards for the *Hospital Accreditation Program* and the *Ambulatory Health Care Accreditation Program*.