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Cultural Competence in Today's World
Sunbeam Shares Tips on How to be Culturally Competent

(OKLAHOMA CITY) – Everyone has their own unique story. Some display as an open book and others are in the restricted section; however, all stories include a major confounding variable - culture. Culture, simply put, is a person's "way of life" based on the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. Within the helping profession, one of the best ways to promote success for an individual is to learn, develop and maintain cultural competence.

Here are some methods to help in becoming culturally competent:

- Self-Reflect— Recognize and understand your own values, beliefs, norms and how they shape your views of the world.
- Awareness — Increase your knowledge of other particular cultures and recognize there may be differing views within the group.
- Be proactive — Don't be afraid to ask questions, but do so respectfully.
- Acceptance — Be open: don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone.
- Embrace — Develop skills of diverse communication and interaction.
- Communicate — Interact with diverse groups and cultures.

"Being culturally competent means understanding, communicating with, and effectively interacting with people across cultures," said David Swope, L.P.C., L.A.D.C., C.E.A.P. and clinical director at Sunbeam.

"Understanding our own cultural norms may be completely opposite from another's is crucial. Omitting this key factor can potentially lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, loss of productivity and exclusions."

For more information, email Swope at EAP@SunbeamFamilyServices.org or call 405-528-7721.

Sunbeam offers high-quality, affordable Counseling services for people of all ages who need help with life's challenges. Sunbeam's staff consists of mental health professionals who provide traditional counseling services based on their professional training, experience and areas of expertise. Counselors are Licensed, License Eligible, or Master Level Interns who are supervised by Licensed Clinicians. Sunbeam's counselors are professionally trained in individual, marital, relationship and family therapies. They have the experience and dedication to help individuals and families find solutions that provide hope.

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About Sunbeam Family Services

Founded in 1907, Sunbeam Family Services is one of Oklahoma's longest serving nonprofits and is one of the original United Way of Central Oklahoma Community partners. Sunbeam's mission is to provide help, hope and the opportunity to succeed to people of all ages in central Oklahoma through Early Childhood, Counseling, Foster Care and Senior Services. To learn more, call 405-528-7721, visit sunbeamfamilyservices.org, or join the conversation on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.