

*You Just Don't Understand!*

Essentials for Overcoming  
Communication Barriers



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Behavioral Health &  
Developmental Services

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# *Discussion points*

**Building a common framework**

**How culture and language influence communication**

**Three pillars of effective communication**

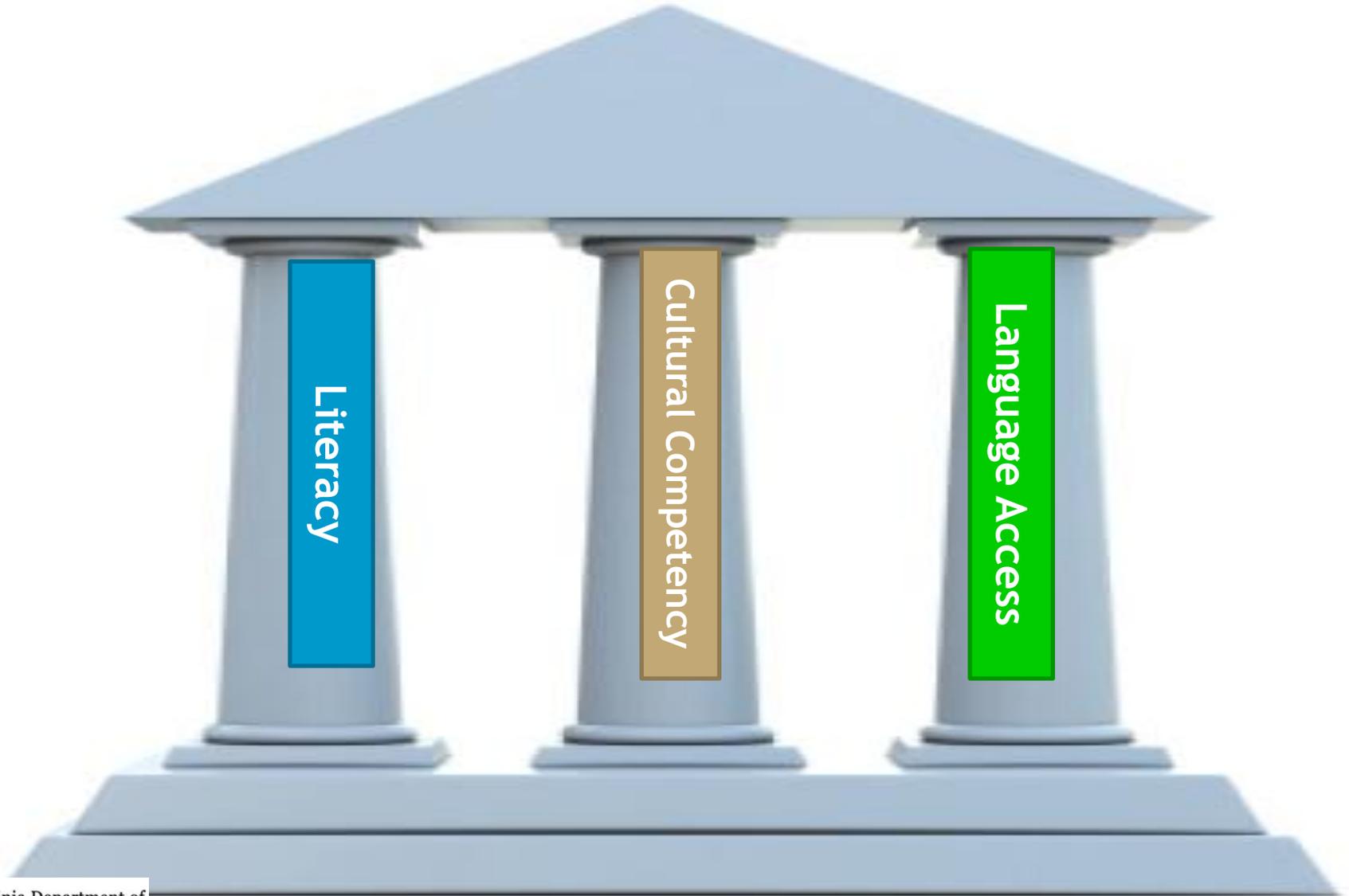
**Applying your knowledge**

*We communicate in all kinds of ways, all day, every day.*

- Direct meetings and conversations
- Our dress, body language, and greetings
- Telephone, e-mail, memos, and letters
- Brochures (ours and others we share with individuals we serve)
- How we interpret plans, orders, directions, or decisions
- Information on websites
- Referrals to or from other services
- Navigation around facilities

Communication is every way in which we discuss, receive, or convey information

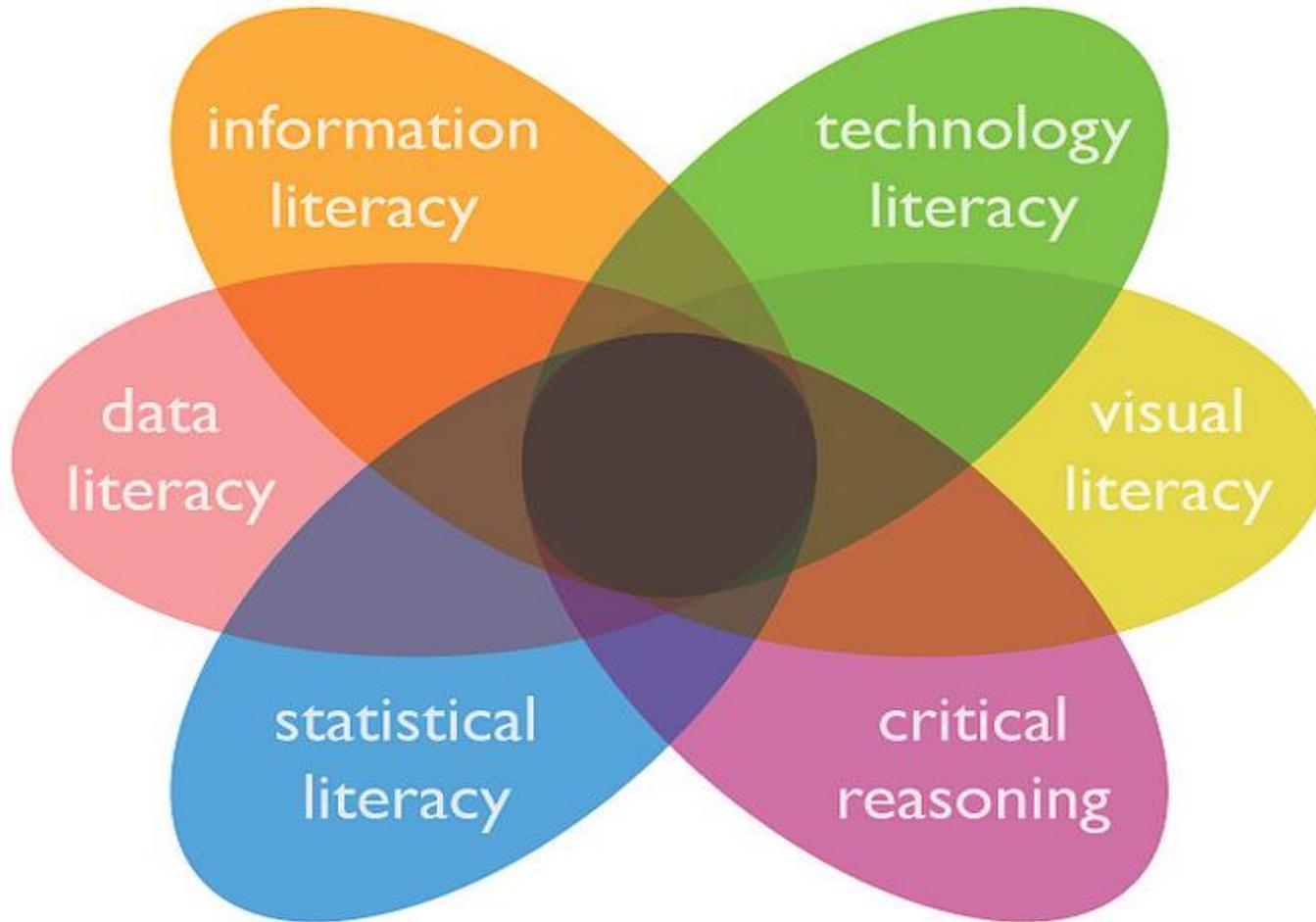
# *Unified Communication Approach*



# Essentials for Overcoming Communication Barriers

*LITERACY*

# Why Learn About Literacy?



Why Learn about Literacy?

# The Cost of Low Literacy

Illiteracy has tremendous consequences, but these consequences go beyond the affected individual. They affect families, communities and the entire society.



## Annual U.S. Tab For Low Literacy



**\$80  
Billion**

in lost worker  
productivity



**\$106-236  
Billion**

The cost of low  
health literacy  
each year



**\$225  
Billion**

in unemployment  
benefits, lost  
taxes and crime



Every dollar invested in adult literacy yields \$7.14 in return.

### Did You Know?

The less education someone has, the lower their numeracy abilities and, therefore, the lower their financial literacy skills are.



A parent's educational level is the greatest indicator of whether their child will grow up in poverty.



Literacy Partners

Until every adult can read *this*.

literacypartners.org  
#fightilliteracy

# Why Learn About Literacy?

## US READING LITERACY

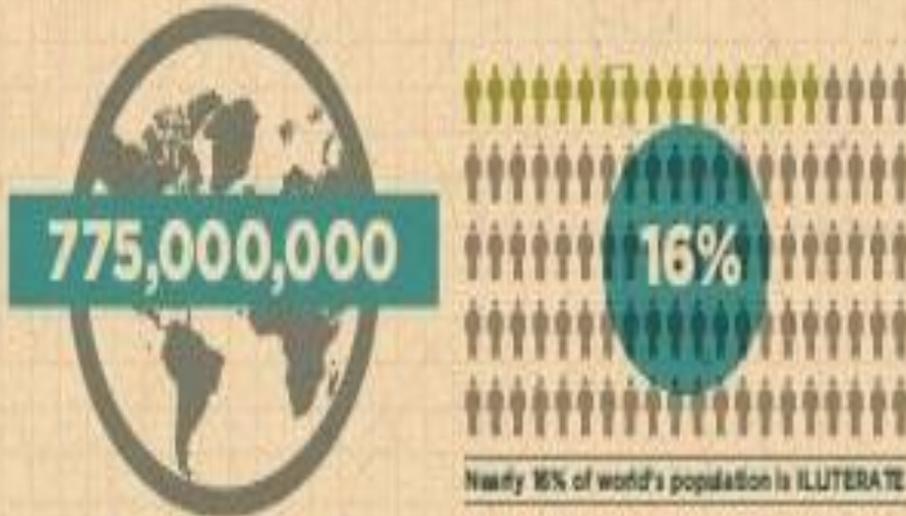
Percentage of the population of each state that has below a 5th grade level of literacy



# Why Learn About Literacy?

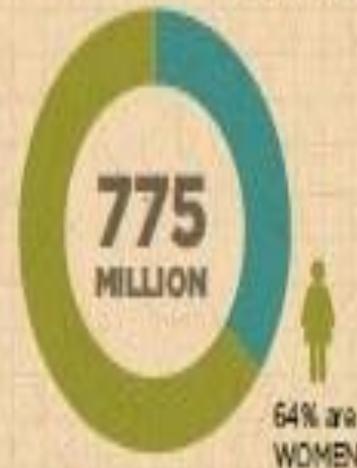
## LITERACY IN THE WORLD

### GLOBAL ILLITERATE POPULATION



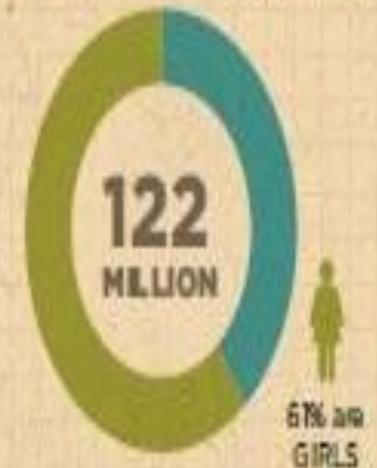
### ADULT ILLITERATE POPULATION

Age > 15



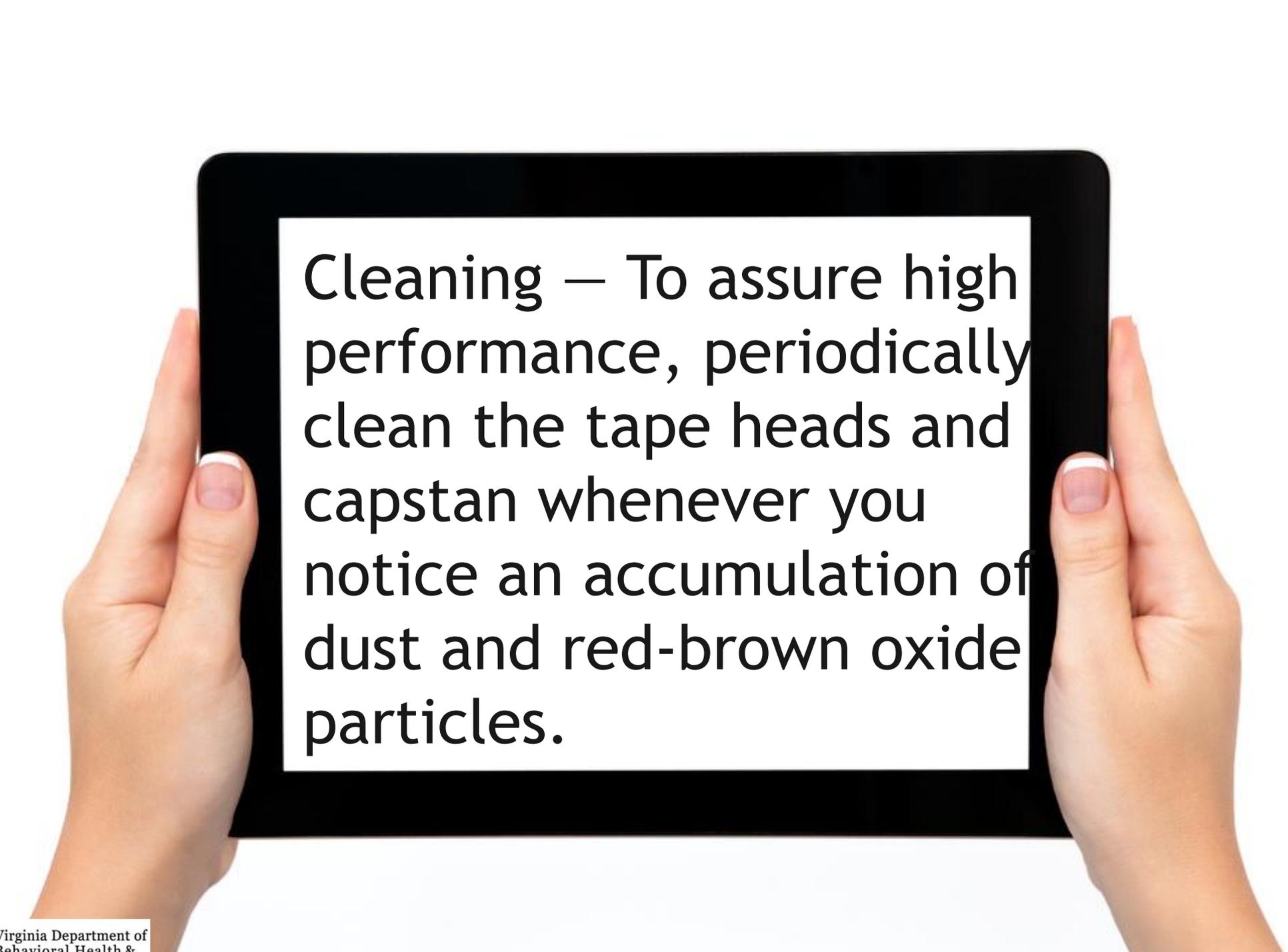
### YOUTH ILLITERATE POPULATION

Age 15-24



*Think...*

GNINAE LC — Ot  
erussa hgih  
ecnamrofrep,  
yllacidoirep naelc eht  
epat sdaeh dna  
natspac revenehw uoy  
eciton na noitalumucca  
fo tsud dna nworb-der  
edixo selcitrapp.

A pair of hands is shown holding a black tablet. The tablet's screen is white and contains the following text:

Cleaning – To assure high performance, periodically clean the tape heads and capstan whenever you notice an accumulation of dust and red-brown oxide particles.

*So What Can You Do?*



## *Use Plain, Noncomplex Language*

*So What Can You Do?*

<b>Problem Word?</b>	<b>Consider Using...</b>
Cognitive	Learning/thinking
Adequate	Enough
Excessive	Too much
Routinely	Often
Condition	How you feel
Oral	By mouth
Avoid	Stay away from
Option	Choice
Collaborate	Work together

# So What Can You Do?



Ventura County Great American Smoke out Loteria

**Stick to one idea at a time**

**Write as if you were talking to a friend**



# Create a Shame-Free Environment

*So What Can You Do?*



# Essentials for Overcoming Communication Barriers

*CULTURAL RELEVANCE*

Understanding other cultures is great but...

## NOTES

Each person's unique cultural background influences his/her health beliefs, attitudes, and practices.

Everyone brings their own cultural backgrounds, values styles, beliefs, and biases to encounters with service providers.

**BUT** understanding **YOUR** own cultural background, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors and how they may be affecting your communication **IS MORE IMPORTANT** to building an effective relationship with families from diverse backgrounds.

Nonverbal  
Communication  
varies greatly  
among people,  
often leading to  
cross-cultural  
misunderstanding





**KEEP**

**CALM**

**BECAUSE**

**IT'S ALL**

**ABOUT YOU**

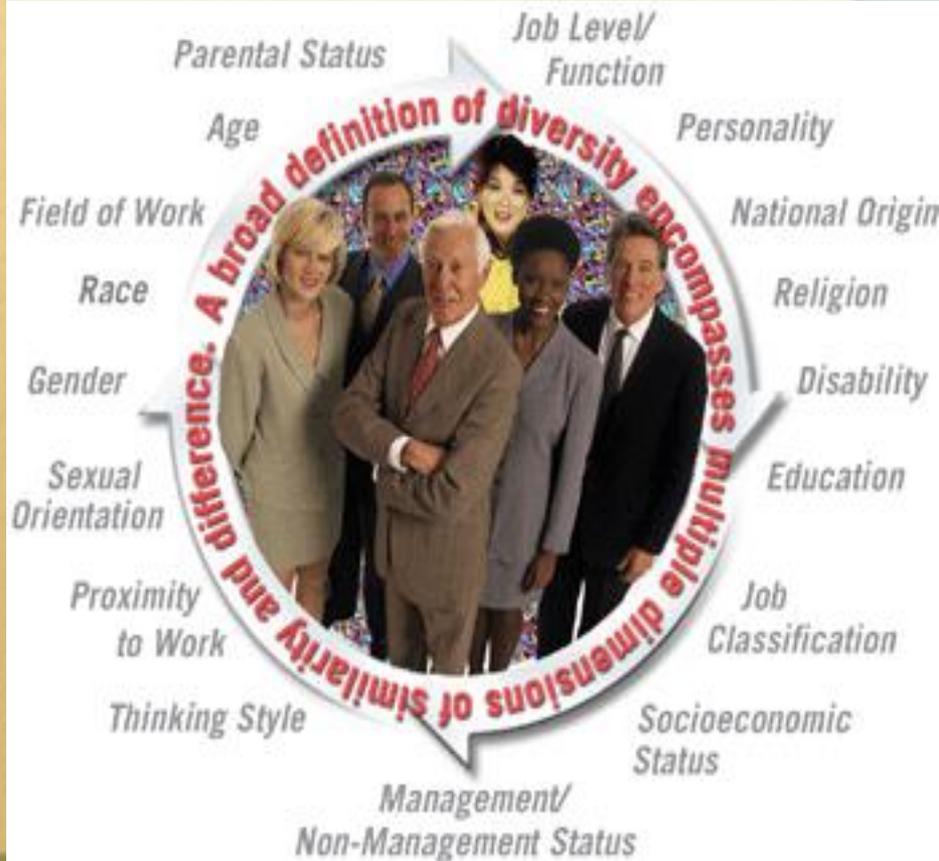
# Rethinking Culture

Culture can be....

THICK

THIN

COMPARTMENTALIZED



# Key Points on Culture

Dynamic  
web of  
meaning

Often outside  
our  
awareness

Influences how  
and with whom  
we can connect

Everyone  
has it

# *What can you do? Attitudes...*

1. Proactively work to eliminate inequities in your practice

2. Recognize the lifelong commitment

3. Commit to equal quality and fairness for every family

# So What Can You Do? Knowledge...



Awareness of internalized beliefs, values, norms, and biases.



Understanding how ethnocentrism influences our interactions



Understanding how culture impacts behaviors around health, illness, and health seeking practices



Awareness of demographic changes and implications to your services



Awareness of cross cultural variation in verbal and non-verbal communication

# Essentials for Overcoming Communication Barriers

*LANGUAGE ACCESS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
LEARNERS*

# What is Linguistic Competence?

The interpreter would like to say...



An example of a translated form

**PHIÊN DỊCH CHO NHÂN VIÊN Y TÁ/ FOR NURSING STAFF ONLY**

Influenza Vaccine Manufacturer and Lot # \_\_\_\_\_

L  R  Other \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> (circle one)

Interpreter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Entered into Logic \_\_\_\_\_

(nt.)

**PHIÊN DỊCH CHO NHÂN VIÊN NĂNG KỸ/ FOR REGISTRATION STAFF**

(copy of card)  
(document to be made at time of registration)

\_\_\_\_\_

Phiên dịch Anh Ngữ sang Việt Ngữ bằng chính xác càng tốt. Nếu từ, thuật ngữ, ngữ pháp khác nhau. Vì vậy, tại đây cần khoảng phải in bản sao chính xác từ thích nghi hoặc khác hay khoảng rõ ràng, xin hãy nhớ thông dịch viên hội nhà và vì vậy chúng tôi cần phải biết chắc rằng quý vị hiểu rõ nội dung. Xin

The capacity of an organization and staff to communicate effectively, and convey information in a way that is easily understood by diverse audiences This includes individuals with limited English proficiency, those who have health literacy or literacy barriers and individuals with disabilities.

# WHY LANGUAGE SERVICES?

# It's not just a “nice” thing to do, It's important for Educated and healthy communities

Top 10 Non-English Languages Spoken in Virginia

Language	Percentage of population (as of 2010) <sup>[29]</sup>
Spanish	6.41%
Korean	0.77%
Vietnamese	0.63%
Chinese (including Mandarin)	0.57%
Tagalog	0.56%
French	0.46%
Arabic	0.40%
German	0.37%
Hindi	0.34%
Persian	0.32%

- Can help lead to positive outcomes
- Better use of the system
- Fairer outcomes
- Quicker resolution
- Stronger relationships
- Poor communication can encourage negative outcomes
- Misunderstandings of what is needed
- Individual difficulty in following instructions
- Understanding of plans and, ultimately, both the actual and perceived fairness

### Percent of Virginia's Foreign Born Population that speaks English less than "very well"



### Percent of Virginia's Recent Foreign Immigrant Households that are linguistically isolated



Source: 2006 American Community Survey

DEMOGRAPHICS & WORKFORCE SECTION Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service University of Virginia

# *It's important for Compliance*



“No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance.”

—Civil Rights Act of 1964

***Organizations are required to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by English Language Learners.***

# *It's important for Compliance*

Federal law requires programs that educate children with limited English proficiency to be:

1. based on a sound educational theory;
2. adequately supported, with adequate and effective staff and resources, so that the program has a realistic chance of success; and
3. periodically evaluated and, if necessary, revised.

[www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/qa-ell.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/qa-ell.html)

*Moving from a state of bliss*

“Between my  
broken Spanish  
and her broken  
English...we got  
by...”



**THIS IS NOT LANGUAGE ACCESS**

*It's important for Quality*



## Untrained Interpreters

Oops! ☹️

- 52% Omission
- 16% False Fluency
- 13% Substitution
- 10% Editorialization
- 8% Addition

# *It's important for Quality*

## **Trained interpreters:**

- Accurately interpreted most (74%) of the conversation (Range: 47%-98%)
- Had higher accuracy during non-technical portions of the discussion in comparison with the technical portions.





*It's important for Quality*



*Children as Interpreters*



# Moving from a State of Bliss



Add a caption

Added October 23 · Like · Comment

 Kate Peeples Brown likes this.

 **Juana Jeanneth Rodriguez** Nany ya esta muy grandeee ya no es la bb q banaba y le limpiaba y le daba sopa en su boca mmmm como me acuerdo d eso aaaayyyy extrano ala nataly de antes una bb q yo kuidava antes mmmm q lastima q vuela el tiempo !!!:)  
Saturday at 9:47am · Like

 **Kate Peeples Brown** Yeah, what Juana said!  
15 hours ago · Unlike ·  1 person

From your album:  
Mobile Uploads

Uploaded via:  
Facebook for Android



Share

Tag This Photo

Edit This Photo

Delete This Photo

Make Profile Picture

[Kate](#) sent you a message.



**Kate Peeples Brown** November 14, 2010 at 9:30pm  
Subject: What Juana said...  
...according to Google Translate:

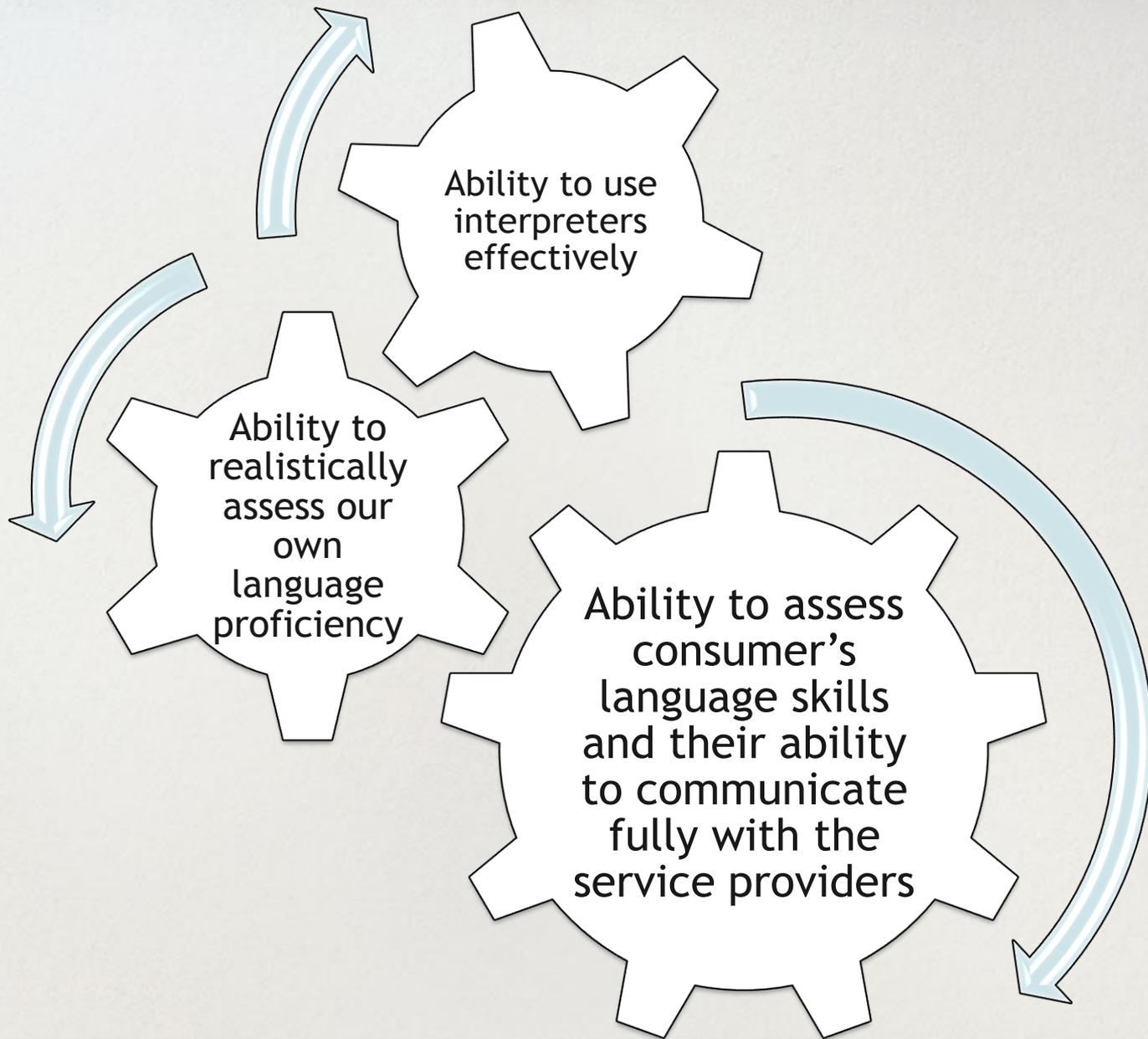
Nany already very grandeee is no longer the bb q wiped and bathed and gave him soup in your mouth mmmmm, d how I remember that strange aaaayyyy nataly wing before I kuidava a bb before mmmmm q q q sorry time flies! :)

I get the gist anyway! :-)

Avoid the crisis

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

# What Can You Do?



Speak in relatively short segments; pause so there is time to interpret.

Ask interpreter interpret everything into the first person (avoid “he said, she said”)

Ask open ended questions and talk directly to the person.

Avoid using slang or idioms

- “A bundle of nerves”
- “Chip off the ole block”
- “No pain, no gain”

Speak about one thing at a time.

*What can you do?*

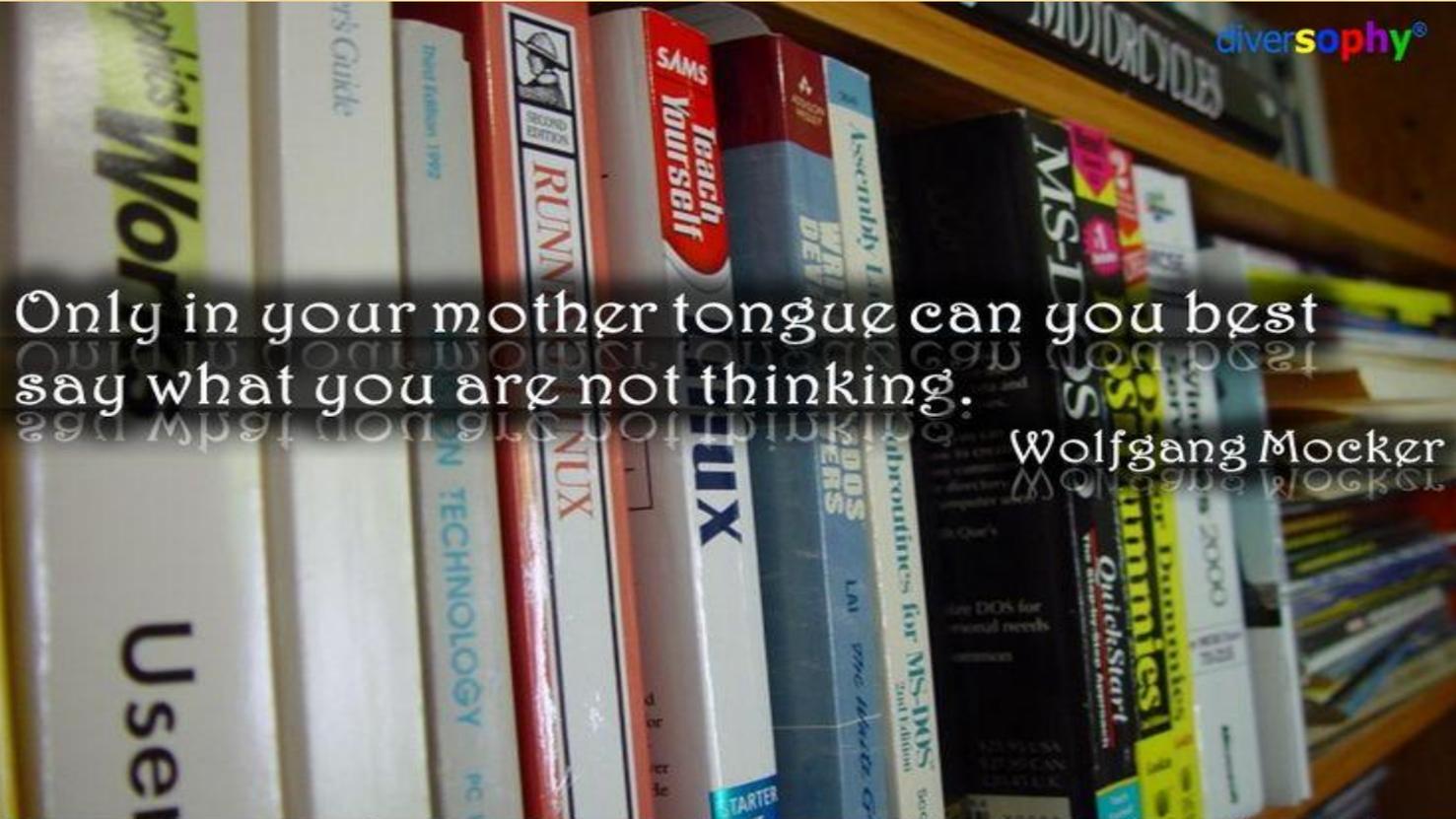
# What can you do?

- Individual's Right to Know
- Interpreting
- Translation
- Way-finding
- Community Involvement
- Training
- Assistive Technology/Communication Tools
- Signage

- ✓ MISSION CRITICAL
- ✓ INCLUDE FUNDING IN ANNUAL BUDGET
- ✓ TRAIN ALL STAFF ON THE POLICY AND HOW TO WORK WITH LANGUAGE PROVIDERS
- ✓ CONSIDER A DIFFERENTIAL FOR BILINGUAL STAFF
- ✓ REQUIRE TESTING AND TRAINING FOR BILINGUAL STAFF

What can you do?

# Moving from a state of bliss



Only in your mother tongue can you best say what you are not thinking.

Wolfgang Mocker

Public Domain Image. Books writing MS Dos Device Drivers Assembly Language[Photograph]. Retrieved from <http://www.public-domain-image.com/objects-public-domain-images-pictures/books-public-domain-images-pictures/books-writing-ms-dos-device-drivers-assembly-language.jpg.html>