

An Introduction: Cultural Competence for Sexual Violence Sector Professionals

MATSOC/MATSA Joint Conference: Preventing Sexual Violence
Through Assessment, Treatment and Safe Management

Robert S. Wright – April 11, 2018,

Who is Robert Wright?

- A RSW Private Practitioner
 - direct practice and forensics
- Former MH Counsellor, Washington State Penn.
- Member ATSA
- Expert in PCA & CIA
- Former member NSBS Racial Equity Committee



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Agenda

- 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM – What is Culture; Why cultural competence; Client profiles, diverse victims and perpetrators; Challenges with cultural competence in the field; Cultural competence - definition
- 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM – Break, Visit to Book Vendor and Exhibitors, Refreshments
- 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM – Cultural location and Nichols Model; Values exercise
- 12:15 PM - 1:15 PM – Luncheon
- 1:15 PM - 2:45 PM – Social, cultural, historical context; Spot the issues; Appropriate attitudes; Communicating across and about culture; Self-disclosure
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Your Questions as We Begin

- We're going to spend a day together. In order for this to be valuable to you it should answer your questions. So . . .
- What are your questions as we begin ?

What Is Culture?

- Culture is the collection of definitive beliefs, behaviors, artifacts, and other characteristics shared commonly among members of a group.
- Though we often think about linguistic, racial, national and ethnic groups when we think of culture, the term can apply to groups that share other characteristics in common. Consider: gay culture, deaf culture, crip culture, children's culture, youth culture, and the culture shared by persons of defined generations (Boomers, Gen X, Y, Millennials)

Why Cultural Competence?

- Difference in culture between therapist and client can create a barrier that makes counselling more difficult (c.f. Sue & Sue, 2013. *Counselling the Culturally Diverse*).
- Clients' cultures may contain resources or barriers to healing that therapist must navigate.
- Therapists must bring a critical perspective to counselling conventions that may need re-evaluating when working with some populations
- Clients are affected for good or ill by the culture that surrounds them. Critical, anti-oppressive, feminist, and other post-modern practice frameworks require the capacity to consider systemic oppression.

A Diversity of Peoples – Removed for Posting

- In my original presentation I prepared 4 case scenarios:
 - Ronald is visually impaired and was convicted of possession and distribution of child porn.
 - Arjun is a 25 year old undergraduate student of South Asian heritage who was charged with sexual assault and forcible confinement.
 - Tanya is an African Canadian woman who experienced sexual and racial harassment on the job.
 - Kyle is a young, gay university student who was trafficked.
- I chose to delete the more detailed profiles for posting for fear that the these clients could be identified.

Cultural Competence: Definition

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 - A. understand our own cultural positions and how they differ from and are similar to others
 - B. understand the historical, social, and cultural reality in which we live and work and in which our clients live and work
 - C. cultivate appropriate attitudes towards cultural difference
 - D. be able to generate and interpret a wide variety of verbal and non-verbal responses
 - E. understand structural oppression and demonstrate awareness and commitment to social justice

The Challenges of Cultural Competence

- With perpetrators:
 - Challenges a simplistic understanding of patriarchal power and control as core genesis of sexual aggression
- With victims:
 - Challenges our generic understanding of the affects of abuse on victims.
 - Requires exploration of the resonance of sexual violence with other, deeper forms of systemic abuse and systemic oppression and harm.

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Nichols' Model for Understanding Cultural Difference

Philosophical Perspective on Cultural Difference. Edwin Nichols (cf. work of Jung)

Different world cultures developed out of differing physical environments.

These world views have differing constructs:

- Axiology (values)
- Epistemology (way of knowing)
- Logic (principles of reason)
- Process (practice of reason)

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

DEVELOPED BY EDWIN J. NICHOLS, PH.D.

ETHNIC GROUPS ETHNIC WORLDVIEW	AXIOLOGY	EPISTEMOLOGY			LOGIC	PROCESS
		APPLIED	PEDAGOGY	METHODOLOGY		
EUROPEAN EURO-AMERICAN	Member-Object The highest value lies in the object or the acquisition of the object	One knows through Counting and Measuring	Parts to Whole	Linear and Sequential <i>-Assembly line-</i>	Dichotomous <i>Either/Or</i> <i>-Newtonian theory-</i>	All sets are repeatable and reproducible <i>-Technology-</i>
AFRICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN LATINO/A ARAB	Member-Member The highest value lies in the relationships between persons	One knows through Symbolic Imagery and Rhythm (function) <i>-Gladwell <u>Blink</u>-</i>	Whole Holistic Thinking <i>-The BIG picture-</i>	Critical Path analysis <i>-Cut to the chase-</i>	Diunital <i>Union of opposites</i> Difrasismo <i>-Aztec thought-</i> The In Between <i>Ibn 'Arabi</i> <i>-Quantum theory-</i>	All sets are interrelated through human and spiritual networks <i>-Black church-</i>
ASIAN ASIAN AMERICAN POLYNESIAN	Member-Group The highest value lies in the cohesiveness of the group	One knows through Transcendental Striving <i>-Tree the forest-</i>	Whole and parts are seen simultaneously <i>-To read a Chinese word-</i>	Cyclical and Repetitive <i>-Stroke order in writing a Chinese word-</i>	Nyaya <i>-The objective world is conceived independent of thought and mind-</i> <i>-Chaos theory-</i>	All sets are independently interrelated in the harmony of the universe <i>-Keiretsu-</i>
NATIVE AMERICAN	Member-Great Spirit The highest value lies in oneness with the Great Spirit	One knows through Reflection and Spiritual Receptivity <i>-Purification rites-</i>	Whole is seen in cyclic movement <i>-Seasons-</i> <i>-Medicine Wheel-</i>	Environmentally experiential reflection <i>-Rites of Passage-</i>	Great Mystery <i>-A set of 4 and a set of 3 form the whole-</i> <i>-Super string theory-</i>	All sets are interrelated through the elements, plant, animal, and spiritual networks <i>-White Buffalo-</i>

Nichols Paraphrased

- Critical exploration of culture will involve an exploration of three critical phenomena. Each need to be explored and clarified over time through questions and conversations:
 - Values: What is important to you? What does it mean that (named abuse or offense) given that (specific reference to aspect of culture) ?
 - Way of Knowing: How did you learn/who taught you that?
 - Way of Problem Solving: When (that value) is challenged, how do you figure it out?

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Culture and Values

- Think about the cultural groups of which you are a member. Identify one or two things that define the group.
- Now think about the two highest values that you hold. Write them down

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- Now . . .
- Find the person in the room whose values most closely resembles yours. Discuss with them the connection between your values and your cultural location or origin.

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- Now think about the two highest values that you hold. Write them down
- Now . . .
- Find the person in the room whose values are most divergent from yours. Discuss with them the connection between your values and your cultural location or origin.

Conflicting Values

- IF TIME PERMITS
- Line up in centre of room
- Two paces to the right if . . .
- One pace to the left if . . .

Lunch

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Social, Cultural and Historical Context

- North American Diversity is fraught with complicated and tragic history
 - **Enslavement of Africans, Genocide of First Nations, Global strife resulting in trans-global immigration, Homophobia, Ableism, Violence against women . . .**
 - A local knowledge of how this history actively affects people today generally and the client specifically is important
- (Aylward talks of the need for this knowledge to aid in our ability to “spot issues” of race, for example)

“Spot the Issues”

- Refer back to the handout.
- In small groups of 3 or 4 (or in pairs depending on room logistics) re-read the profiles and see if you can “spot the issues” in each.
- What sort of questions would you ask? What sort of research might you need to do to better understand the issues?

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Appropriate Attitudes

Cultural competence requires that practitioners actually *value* diversity, not just tolerate it. In a nation that acknowledges multiple founding peoples, that was built up on the foundation of ethnic/immigrant labour and whose future depends on immigration and the inclusion of historically marginalized persons into the mainstream, any other attitude should reasonably be seen as unacceptable. (cf. “reasonable person” RvS)

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Communicating Across Cultures

Cross cultural communication is a complex study in cultural hermeneutics. In sociology: the context of a person's world view is necessary for the proper understanding and interpretation of behaviour and rhetoric (c.f. Voyvodic, pp. 16, 17)

Before meaningless, unnatural, non-human or immature behaviour and corresponding values are attributed to people of another culture, it is better to begin by doubting the adequacy of one's own judgment and knowledge

- **Elmar Holenstein**

Elmar Holenstein Paraphrased

Before you conclude that I
am crazy you should consider
the possibility that you are
stupid!

Communicating About Culture

- Therapists must have the ability to speak the unspeakable and make visible the invisible. This presumes that the therapist knows those things that are not spoken and can see the things that most cannot see.
- This requires knowledge, courage, and the projection of confidence. Ask questions authoritatively and not as a cultural tourist. Give the client homework to research unexplored aspects of their history and culture.

Self-disclosure

- Some controversy in the literature on the use of therapist self-disclosure generally and its use with forensic clients in particular.
 - When done appropriately, may increase confidence in therapist's expertise and positively support therapist/client relationship.
 - Risks include: enhanced countertransference, reversal of therapeutic roles, and increasing clients' sense of inadequacy.
- When working cross culturally some elements of the therapists cultural location will be visible, others may be publicly well-known. To what degree should the therapist be transparent about these issues and how should they discuss them with the client?

Communicating Across/About Exercise

- Pair up
- Choose which partner will be therapist and which client
- The client may choose to be one of the clients whose profiles you have or may choose to be themselves or some other fictional character
- The therapist asks the questions. Improvise probing questions as follow ups. Self-disclose.
- What did it feel like asking the questions? What were your most effective follow up questions? Was the self-disclosure necessary?

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Understand Structural Oppression

- What have you done/do you do that demonstrates generally that you understand structural oppression and are therefore accessible to and identified as an ally to racialized, Aboriginal, immigrant and otherwise marginalized individuals?
- Does your language in explaining perceived racism demonstrate this commitment?

Resources

- Aylward, C., & Canadian Electronic Library. (1999). Canadian critical race theory racism and the law (DesLibris. Books collection). Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood.
- Bell, P. (2002). Chemical Dependency and the African American. Center City, MN: Hazelden
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- Nichols, E. (2013). Cultural competence in America's schools leadership, engagement and understanding (Educational policy in the 21st century). Charlotte: Information Age Pub.
- Sue, D., & Sue, David. (2016). *Counseling the culturally diverse : Theory and practice* (7th ed.). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Q & A



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