

Cultural Competence in Human Resource Management

Continuing Care Association of Nova Scotia
Conference, June 7, 2018
Oak Island Inn, Nova Scotia

Who is Robert Wright?

- A RSW Private Practitioner - direct practice and forensics
- Fmr RR-Coord, DDSB
- Fmr Ex. Dir. FCSCC
- Fmr Ex. Dir. NSCYS
- Fmr member NSBS Racial Equity Committee
- “I only used to be somebody!”



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Circle of Safety

- Race and diversity are extremely sensitive issues
- We are all at different stages and levels of our understanding
- To have productive conversations about race and diversity we need to have a “circle of safety”

Draw a “circle of safety”

- Agree to make this a “culturally safe” space:
 - Allow each other space to ask sincere questions
 - Share from your experience
 - Ask about, don’t avoid sensitive topics
 - Avoid known inflammatory words or phrases (n-word, etc)
- What else can we do to ensure safety?

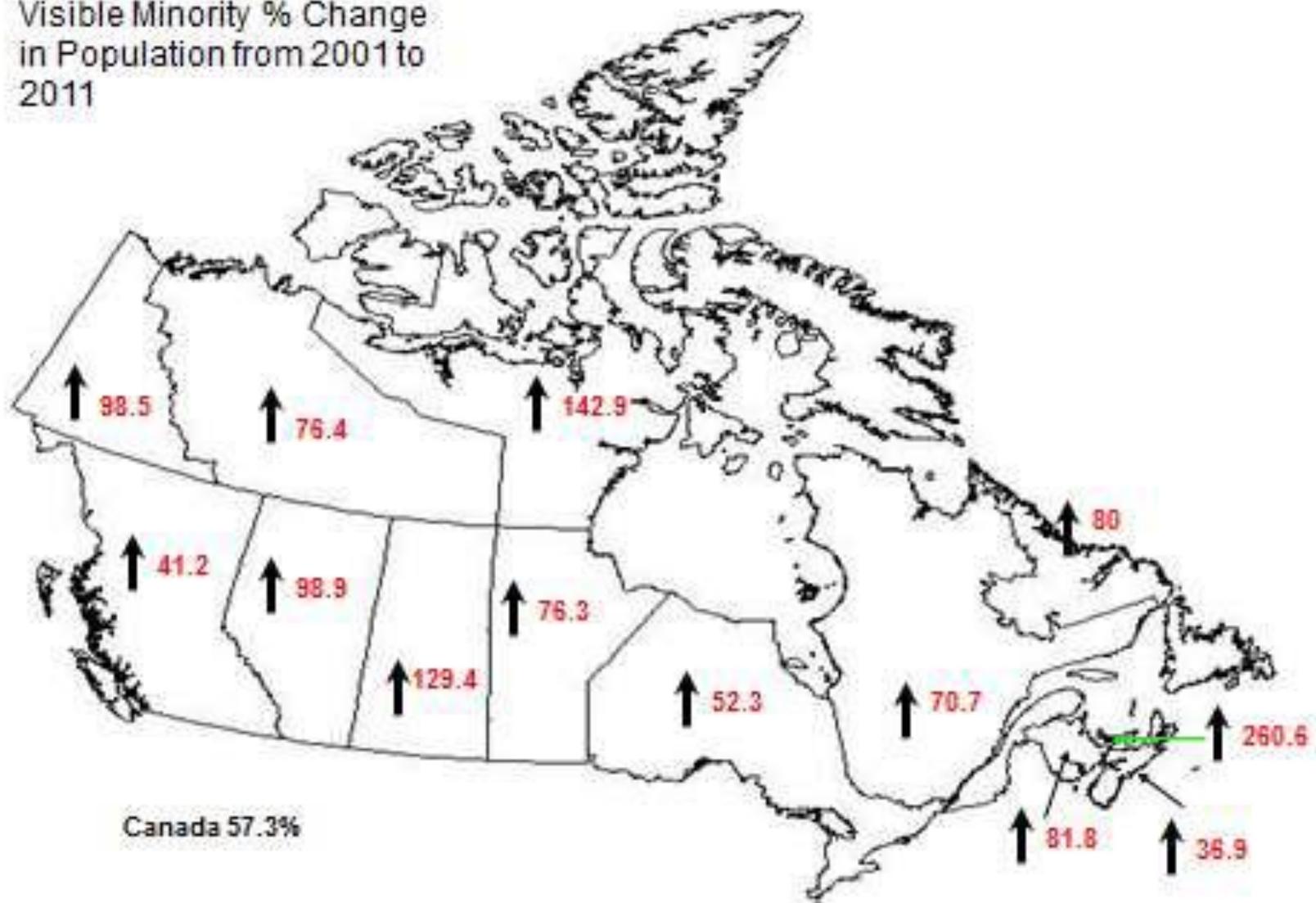
Your Questions as we Begin

- What must you take from this session in order for it to be of value to you?

Why CC in the CC Workplace?

- Historically excluded and immigrant populations are rich pools of new employees
- Client base is increasingly diverse
- Care must be informed by the cultural meaning of disability, aging and dying
- Recruitment, retention and marketing are supported by CC
- The institutional environment IS a hostile environment for employees and clients who represent diversity
- Workplace diversity and inclusion are social equity/justice imperatives

Visible Minority % Change
in Population from 2001 to
2011



Diversity and Inclusion

- Diverse workplace: A workplace where the staff are made up a variety of different peoples. These can be differences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies or demographic differences.
- Inclusive workplace: A workplace where the differences among staff are acknowledged, their different perspectives are valued and their different needs are accommodated.

Tracking the CIBC Online Banking Home Page

A Cultural Competence Project by

Robert S. Wright

March, 2012 – March, 2014

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How it Started

- Involved with cultural competence since 1988
- Have argued most successful companies appeal to an increasingly diverse population
- Brochures and catalogues illustrate this point
- CIBC online banking website homepage
- Just used the alternating main picture as an illustration
- 22 Images collected over 1 year showing significant diversity



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[Sign on with a different card](#)

Password (case-sensitive):

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Important notice

We've changed the agreement that governs CIBC Online Banking. By signing on, you agree to the new version. Please review the [Electronic Access Agreement \(2012\)](#).

[Sign on to other sites](#)

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CIBC protects you
Enhanced browser security

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and you can get cash back
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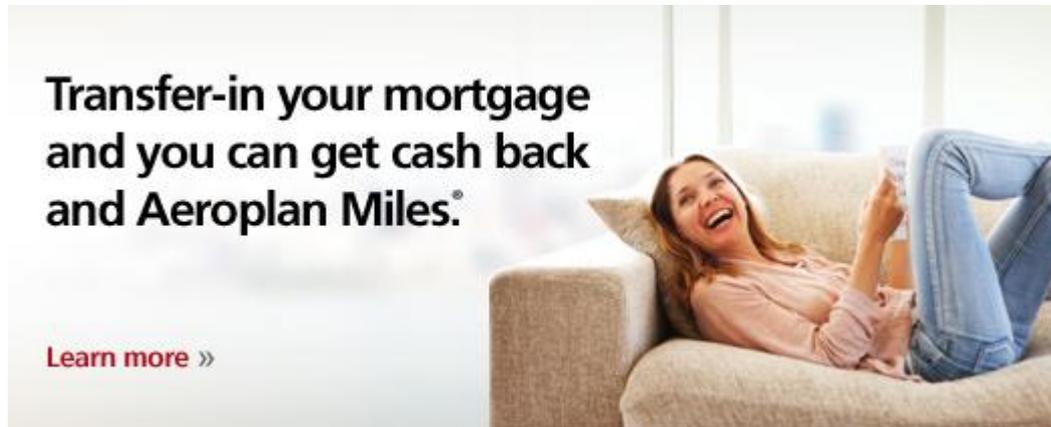
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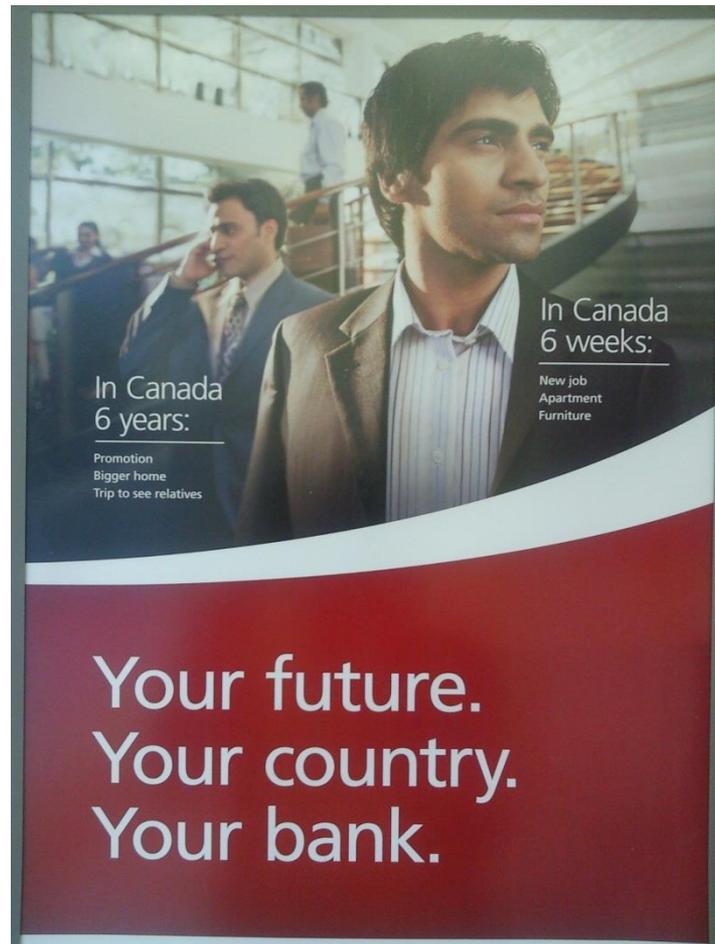
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At this point, CIBC made some renovations to their website. The main graphic began rotating among 3 layouts. This was the only one of the 3 that includes a picture of a person.

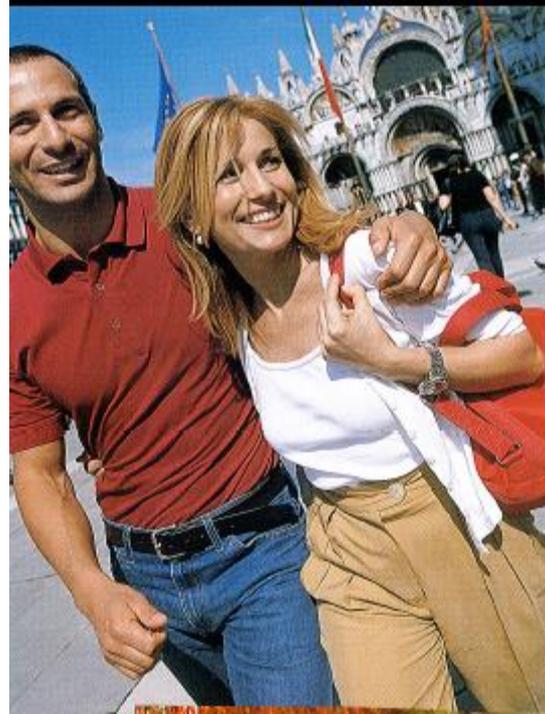
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Around this time I saw this in a CIBC window downtown



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In the Spring of 2013 I saw a large display of brochures at CIBC. I copied the images off of each separate brochure



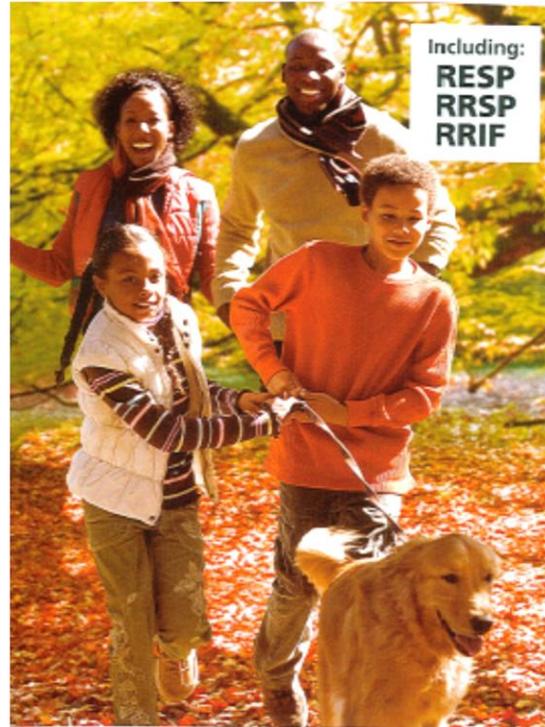
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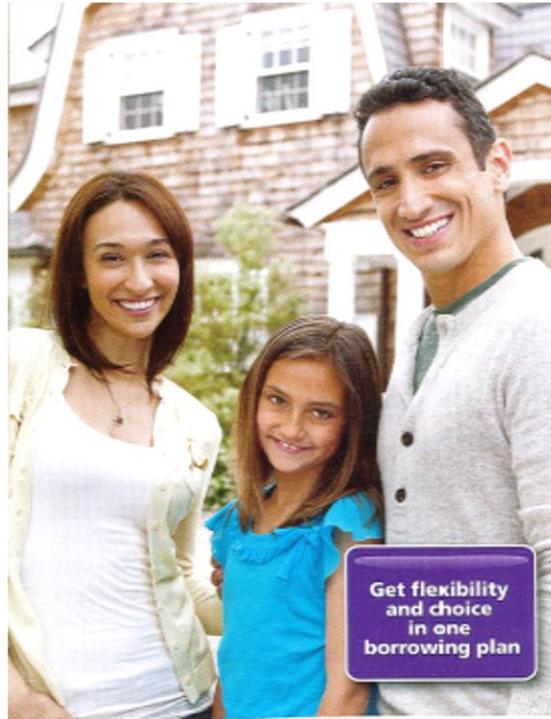
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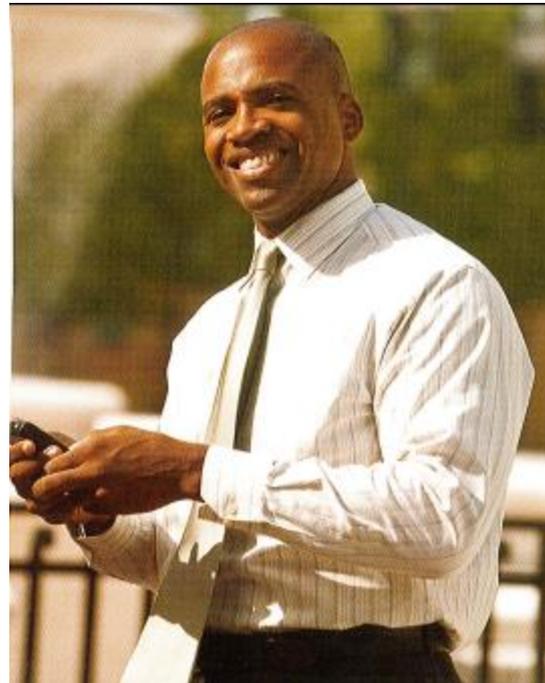
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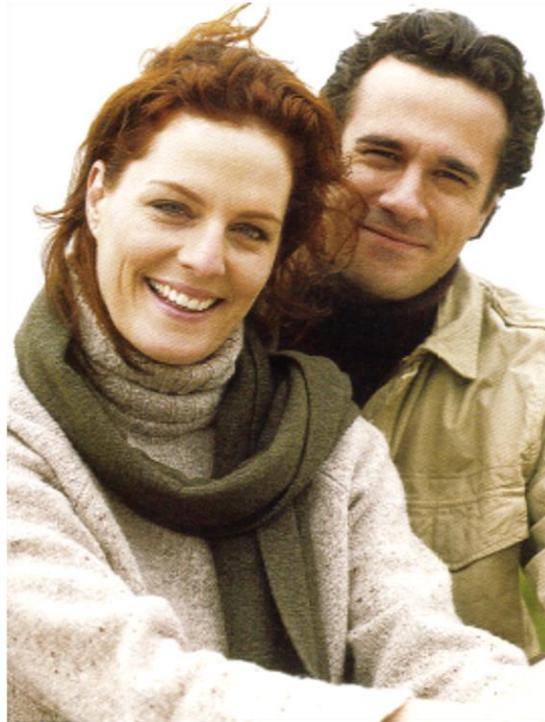
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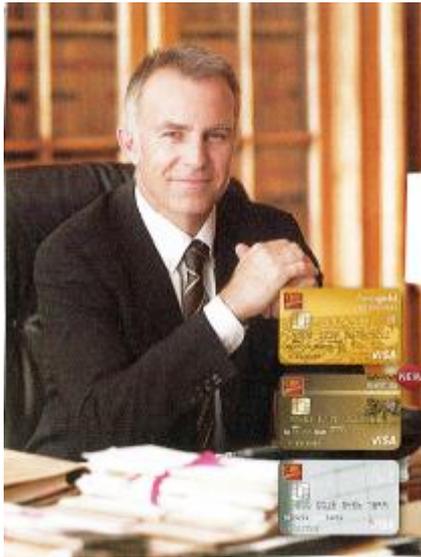
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Now CIBC's mascot is a penguin. You see their family in all of their commercials and branded products. Is it significant that penguins are both black and white??

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What do CIBC visuals tell us about them as a company?

Cultural Competence: Definition

- Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures, and to manage and promote diversity and inclusion:
 - A. Acknowledge and address hostility towards diversity**
 - B. Understand our own cultural positions and how they differ from others
 - C. Understand the different social and cultural realities we work in
 - D. Cultivate appropriate attitudes towards cultural difference
 - E. Generate and interpret a variety of verbal and non-verbal responses
 - F. Understand structural oppression and commit to social justice
 - G. Cultivate the ability to manage diversity tensions and conflicts in a way that promotes inclusion and improved team effectiveness**

A) Acknowledge and address hostility towards diversity

- We cannot begin efforts at cultural competence without acknowledging that we are addressing a REAL problem that is felt by individuals who represent diversity.

Keeping Sane and as an African Canadian Working in White Institutions: Tips for Surviving and Thriving in Hostile Environments

Robert S. Wright

Presentation and Conversation

With IBM Students at the Schulich School of Law

October, 2011, reprised and expanded October 2015

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What is a Hostile Environment

A hostile work environment exists when:

- Discriminatory behaviour against a protected class exists in the environment
- The behaviour constitutes a persistent pattern
- The behaviour must be severe enough to disrupt the work of the targeted employee(s)
- It is expected that the behaviour will continue if uninterrupted.

Hostile Environment: Another Consideration

A hostile environment may also be created structurally when a position exists within an institution that has an antagonistic role within the organization. Consider:

- A quality control officer working in a mine
- An SEC officer working within a security firm
- An officer in an institution responsible for investigating claims of harassment or discrimination

Are Workplaces Hostile Environments?

The BLAC Report, Marshall Enquiry and other reports and studies acknowledge that racism is at work in Nova Scotia and that systemic racism accounts for the “deplorable economic conditions” of ANS.

Given this systemic racism, it stands to reason that as agents of systemic change, racialized employees are defacto change agents and are in structural conflict within the workplace

How do you Stay Sane in a Hostile Environment?

I have developed a 6 point plan for my personal sanity preservation (you can be the judge of my success):

- Identity
- Competence/Excellence
- Analysis
- Independence
- Process
- Action

B) 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>

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Nichol's Model is consistent with a growing understanding and articulation of Aboriginal Traditional Ecological Knowledge: a practice and belief which concerns itself with the interrelationship of all living things with and within their environment.

Africentricity

- The assertion of a worldview that places all people of African descent at its centre, asserts a common culture, philosophy, and history, and critiques, and perhaps even rewrites global history from this perspective

Values Exercise

C) 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 etc.**
- A local knowledge of how our racist history is a living legacy is necessary: Africville, Cornwallis.

African N. American Social, Cultural and Historical Reality: Begins with . . . European Trade Triangle



Results in Systemic Issues

- BLAC report links racial discrimination, racial segregation, lack of equal opportunities in education, to “disastrous consequences in employment and access to other services.”

Results in Psychosocial Injury

- A cluster of social problems and psycho-social phenomena described by Dr. Joy DeGruy as . . .
Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome:
 - Vacant Esteem (c.f. Peter Bell's concept of Cultural Pain)
 - Ever Present Anger
 - Racist Socialization

Bell on Cultural Pain

- “The history of slavery, racism, and segregation, added to today's conflicting expectations and pressure of being a(n) . . . African American, all combine to create cultural pain.” (From Hazelden.org’s description of the Bell text)
- The added shame of emasculating un/under-employment, the natural traumatic resistance to servitude, the confusion of perceptions of selling out when one “goes straight”, create a troubling dynamic for ANS employees in culturally incompetent, hostile workplaces

Social, Cultural and Historical Context of Other Groups

- Though time would not permit it here, a similar analysis of the social/cultural/historical reality of other racialized and marginalized groups could be shared here. Understanding the history of these diversities helps us to understand the hostilities that exist for people in the workplace

D) Appropriate Attitudes

- Cultural competence requires that practitioners VALUE diversity.
- 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, any other attitude should reasonably be seen as unacceptable.

E) Communicating Across Cultures

- In sociology: the context of a person's world view is necessary for the proper understanding and interpretation of behaviour and rhetoric (Voyvodic, pp. 16, 17)

Elmar Holenstein

- 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 Paraphrased

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

Communicating About Culture

- Cultural competence requires the ability to comfortably and competently ask clients about cultural issues that may be a consideration in the context of your work with them.

F) Social Justice Commitment

- We must
 - understand the nature of privilege
 - demonstrate an awareness of structural discrimination
 - demonstrate an active anti-racism/anti-discrimination programme
- What does this look like in the workplace?

G) Cultivate the ability to manage diversity based tensions/conflicts

4 Key Questions for Discussion

- How do you recruit under-represented persons to your teams?
- How do you manage the tensions that come with diversity?
- How do you make your diverse team a high performance team?
- How do you ensure the success of under-represented persons on your teams?

Answers to 4 Key Questions

- Recruitment: Targeted, Meaningful
- Manage tensions: Acknowledge innate hostility, anticipate conflict, provide cc supervision and orientation, provide and find cc support resources
- High performance: Value diversity, understand complexity
- Ensure success: acknowledge structural role of diverse employees and the innate hostility they experience . . . Eliminate micro-aggressions, etc.

Cultural Competence: How?

- Pre service training/internships/apprenticeships
- Conduct organizational assessment of Cultural Competence
- Develop organizational plan to increase Cultural Competence
- Employ and support culturally competent (not just culturally diverse) practitioners as agents of change
- **Make available systematic coaching/ consulting and support services, internal and external**
- Provide continuing education in Cultural Competence

Cultural Competence: How Not

- Do not place the responsibility for cultural competence solely on the shoulders of “diverse” staff – particularly when these persons are among the most junior persons on staff.
- Do not confuse cultural celebrations for cultural competence training.