

Cultural Competence in the Legal Work Environment: Increasing Competence, Managing Diversity

Pink Larkin Retreat, 2016
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Social Worker in Private Practice

Who is Robert Wright?

- Social Work Private Practitioner
- Former:
 - Race Relations Co-ord. DDSB
 - Ex. Dir. FCS Cumberland
 - Ex. Dir. Child & Youth Strategy
- Facilitator, ManTalk



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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 inflammatory words or phrases (n-word, etc)
- What else can we do to ensure safety?

Social Equity

- Safe and positive environment
- Opportunities for under-represented groups
- Fair, just, equitable . . .
 - Management of work environment
 - Distribution of resources and responsibilities
 - Formation and implementation of policy

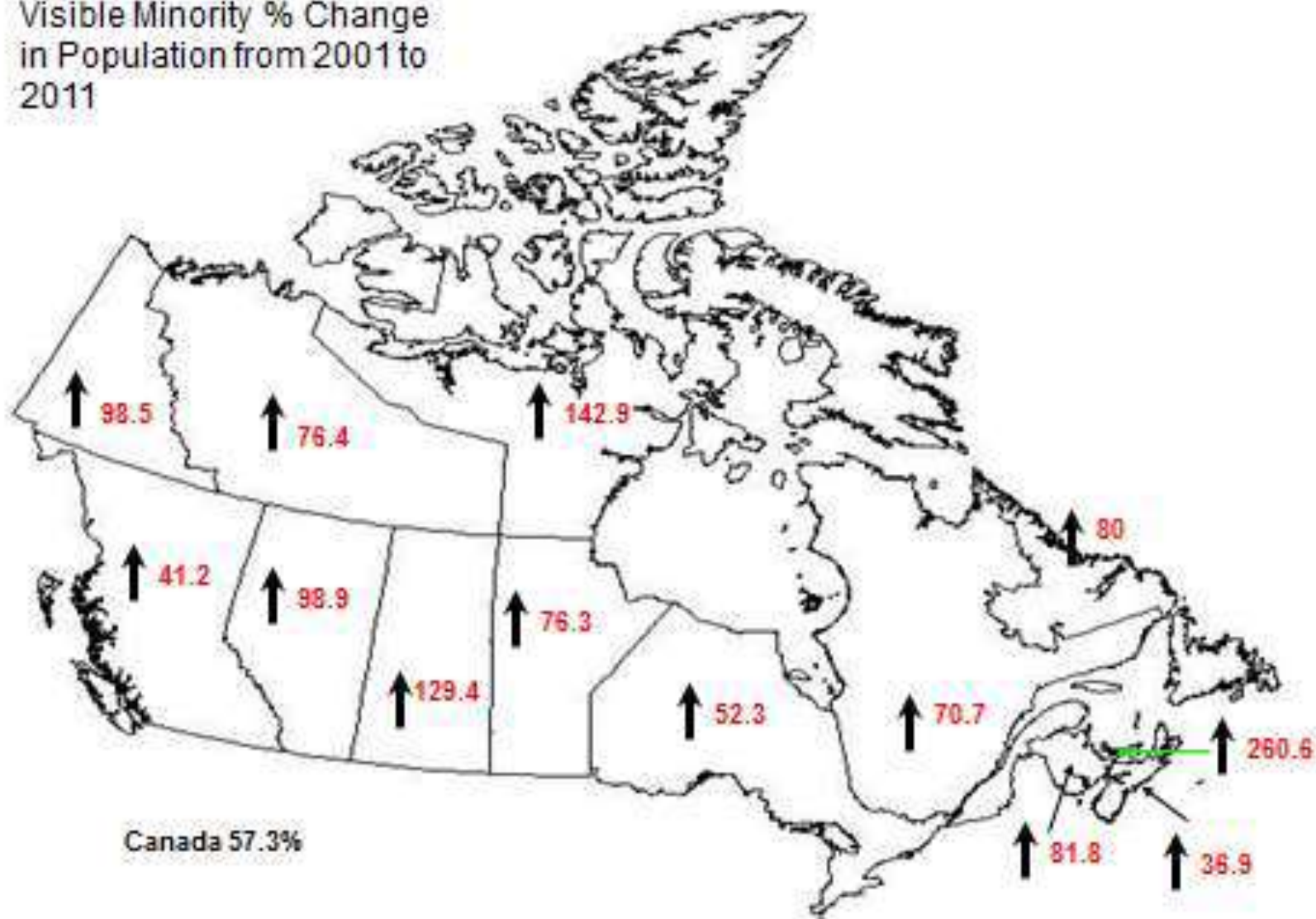
Your Questions as we Begin

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

Diverse Teams – Why?

- Under-represented peoples are gaining increasing space in society
- Demographic of Nova Scotia is changing
- Improves our ability to manage complex problems
- Improves business opportunity

Visible Minority % Change
in Population from 2001 to
2011



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



Personal Banking

Business Services

About CIBC

Advice Centre

Search

Bank Accounts

Credit Cards

Mortgages

Loans & Lines of Credit

Investing

Insurance

Ways to Bank

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Avoid late credit card payments



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What's new at CIBC

[The first banking app designed specifically for iPad](#)

[Shop online using Visa Debit for a chance to win \\$2,500!](#)

Online Banking

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Card Number:

[Delete this card](#)

[Sign on with a different card](#)

Password (case-sensitive):

[Forgot your password?](#)

[Sign On](#)

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 \(2012\)](#).

Online security guaranteed

CIBC protects you
Enhanced browser security

Find a branch or ABM

Enter address or postal code:

[More search options](#)

Helpful resources

- [Open an account](#)
- [Rates and fees](#)
- [Careers](#)

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20120808



At this point, CIBC made some renovations to their website. Now the main graphic rotates among 3 graphics. This is the only one of the 3 that includes a picture of a person. Let's see how long it takes them to change it since the renovation.

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Around this time I saw this in a CIBC window downtown



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



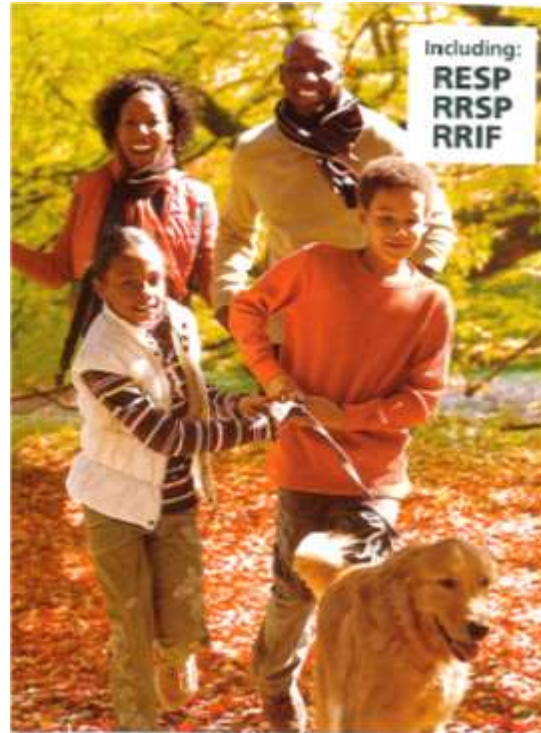
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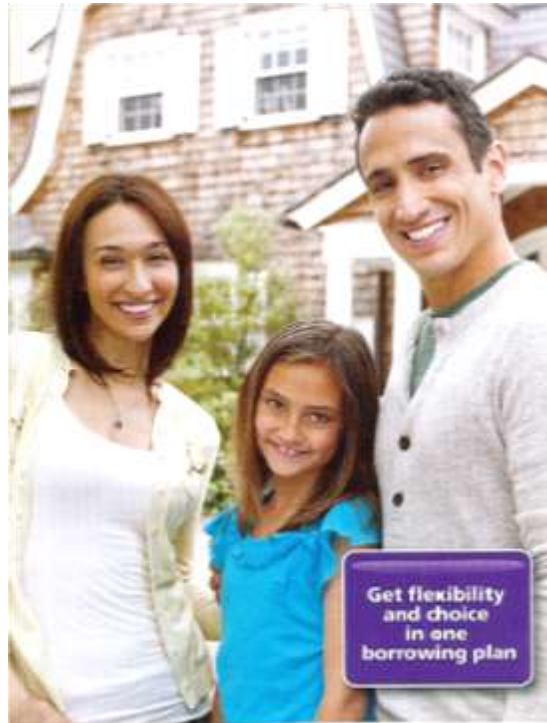
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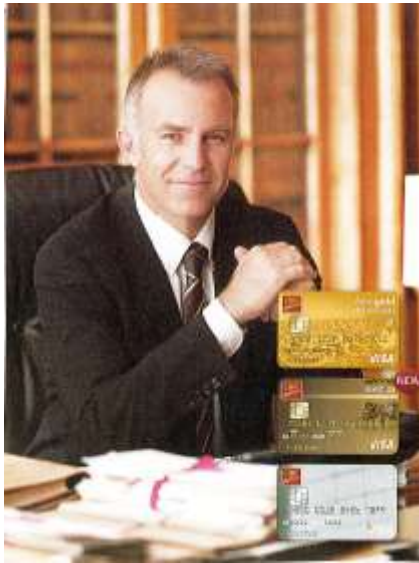
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What do CIBC visuals tell us about them as a company?

4 Key Questions

- 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?

Cultural Competence: Definition

- Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures:
 - A. Understand our own cultural positions and how they differ from others
 - B. Understand the different social and cultural realities we work in
 - C. Cultivate appropriate attitudes towards cultural difference
 - D. Generate and interpret a variety of verbal and non-verbal responses
 - E. Understand structural oppression and commit to social justice

A) 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

B) 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.

C) 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.

D) 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.

E) 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 at Pink Larkin?

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: Anticipate, normalize, mechanisms for discussion
- High performance: Value diversity, accept tension, understand complexity
- Ensure success: acknowledge structural role of diverse employees and the innate hostility they experience . . . Micro-aggressions, etc.

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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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**
- 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.

Q&A



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