

# Assessment and Treatment of African Nova Scotians: Implications of Cultural Difference, Racial Identity, Cultural Pain and Other Factors

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# Rationale

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- This presentation grew out of a need to do two things:
  - Provide a rationale for culturally specific mental health intervention
  - Provide clear examples of elements of culturally specific interventions

# Overview

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- Propositions of Cross Cultural Counseling
- Philosophical perspective on Cultural Difference
- Socio-cultural considerations
- Racial Identity Development
- Other Considerations

# The Myth of Sameness

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- Enslavement based on belief of Blacks as non-persons
- Emancipation/Non-citizen - lesser person
- Segregation - separate but equal
- Integration - we're all the same . . . enlightened in its time
- Equitable treatment vs. Equal treatment

## 2 Propositions of Cross Cultural Counseling

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- 1. Effectiveness is enhanced if counselor and client share same world view
- 2. Effectiveness is enhanced if modality and goals of Counseling are consistent with client's life experience and cultural values
- Many implications flow from these propositions

# Some Implications

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- The counselor must understand culture and be culturally competent
- The counselor must understand the socio-cultural reality of the client

## Some Implications (cont.)

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- The counselor must possess specific knowledge about the groups with which they work
- The counselor must be able to generate a wide variety of verbal and non-verbal responses

# Nichols' Model for Understanding Cultural Difference

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- Different world cultures developed out of differing physical environments
- These world views have differing constructs:
  - Axiology (values)
  - Epistemology (way of knowing)
  - Logic (principle of reason)
  - Process (practice of reason)



Ethnic Groups Ethnic Worldview		Axiology	Epistemology			Logic	Process
			Applied	Pedagogy	Methodology		
	<b>European Euro-American</b>	<b>Member-Object</b> The highest value lies in the object or the acquisition of the object	<b>One knows through Counting and Measuring</b>	<b>Parts to Whole</b>	<b>Linear and Sequential</b> <i>-Assembly line-</i>	<b>Dichotomous</b> <i>Either/Or</i> <i>-Newtonian theory-</i>	All sets are repeatable and reproducible <i>-Technology-</i>
	<b>African African American Latino/a Arab</b>	<b>Member-Member</b> The highest value lies in the relationships between persons	<b>One knows through Symbolic Imagery and Rhythm (function)</b> <i>-Gladwell <u>Blink</u>-</i>	<b>Whole Holistic Thinking</b> <i>-The BIG picture-</i>	<b>Critical Path analysis</b> <i>-Cut to the chase-</i>	<b>Diunital</b> <i>Union of opposites</i> <b>Difrasismo</b> <i>-Aztec thought-</i> <b>The In Between</b> <i>Ibn 'Arabi</i> <i>-Quantum theory-</i>	All sets are interrelated through human and spiritual networks <i>-Black church-</i>
	<b>Asian Asian American Polynesian</b>	<b>Member-Group</b> The highest value lies in the cohesiveness of the group	<b>One knows through Transcendental Striving</b> <i>-Tree the forest-</i>	<b>Whole and parts are seen simultaneously</b> <i>-To read a Chinese word-</i>	<b>Cyclical and Repetitive</b> <i>-Stroke order in writing a Chinese word-</i>	<b>Nyaya</b> <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>
	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Member-Great Spirit</b> The highest value lies in oneness with the Great Spirit	<b>One knows through Reflection and Spiritual Receptivity</b> <i>-Purification rites-</i>	<b>Whole is seen in cyclic movement</b> <i>-Seasons-</i> <i>-Medicine Wheel-</i>	<b>Environmentally experiential reflection</b> <i>-Rites of Passage-</i>	<b>Great Mystery</b> <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' Bottom Line

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- People differ
- Counselor must be able to understand and communicate across cultural difference
- Intervention and its goals must be relevant to the culture
- There are concrete sets of knowledge and skills necessary

# Socio-Cultural Understanding

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- Addiction treatment models grew out of industrialization and concern for disruptions in productivity (understanding of differing addiction patterns of white ethnics long understood)
- Drugs and alcohol have historical economic links to Black communities

# Socio-Cultural Understanding (cont.)

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- Use of drugs/addiction is met with a treatment response . . . trafficking drugs is met with a policing response
- African Nova Scotians under-represented in drug treatment programmes/over-represented in jails
- Treatment models for economically addicted individuals and communities is indicated

# How does racial identity develop?

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- Racial identity develops in stages across the life span
- Each stage has a critical issue, a process for resolution and a significant relationship and/or resource

# Critical Stages of Development:

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- Pre-school (Age 0 - 5 years)
- Early School (Age 5 - 9 years)
- Early adolescence (Age 11 - 14 years)
- Middle adolescence (Age 15 - 18 years)

# Pre-school Stage

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- Critical Issue:
  - Comfort with visible racial differences
- Process for Resolution:
  - Adequate and enlightened physical care
- Significant Relationship(s) & Resources:
  - Primary physical care giver

# Early School Stage

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- Critical Issue:
  - Understanding of personal equality and competence
- Process for Resolution:
  - Facilitated success in social and academic pursuits
- Significant Relationship(s) & Resources:
  - Extended family members/school personnel



# Early Adolescence Stage

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- Critical Issue:
  - Ability to negotiate racial issues with peers
- Process for Resolution:
  - Knowledge of history and politics of race
- Significant Relationship(s) & Resources:
  - Same race role models/culturally specific and anti- racist education

# Middle Adolescence Stage

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- Critical Issue:
  - Comfort with personal choices in context of race
- Process for Resolution:
  - Knowledge of family & cultural values re: race, sex, reproduction, education and vocation

# Middle Adolescence Stage (cont.)

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- Significant Relationship(s) & Resources:
  - Peer group, same race role models, community censors and informal agents, exposure to diversity within ethnic community

# Clinical Implications

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- Counselors must be aware of peculiar psychosocial developmental needs of African Nova Scotian clients across the whole life span.

# Other Considerations

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- Cultural Pain
- Racial Self-hatred
- Confusion of Black Identity with Hip-hop Culture
- Cultural Intimidation
- Academic Non-achievement as Political Resistance

# End

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- Discussion