

An Introduction to Cultural Competence for Sexual Violence Sector Professionals

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

Robert S. Wright – April 5, 2019

Land Acknowledgement



“I would like to acknowledge that we meet on lands that are the traditional territories of the First Nations that originally settled on this land. Among them are the Nipmuc peoples. I would also like to acknowledge that racism is

North America's "original sin" that is at the root of all current social inequities. Acts of reconciliation and reparations, both symbolic and substantial, are critical to our collective emancipation and the ability to live peacefully and sustainably on this land.

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Who is Robert Wright?

- RSW Private Practitioner, N.S.
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The Coast

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FREE

“They should have believed us right from the beginning.”

STOP

STREET

CHECKS

NOW

The street check findings are not news to community leaders like **Robert Wright**, **Sylvia Parris** and **Trayvone Clayton**

A report shows that Halifax police's racist use of street checks is undermining the entire criminal justice system

A graphic showing two black silhouettes of hands reaching towards each other from the top and right sides of the frame, set against a bright yellow background. The hands are positioned as if about to clasp or support each other.

THE PEOPLES' COUNSELLING CLINIC...

**... formerly The Halifax Pro-bono
Counselling Clinic is a service for
low income individuals.**

A “teaching clinic”, the Peoples’ Clinic provides free and low cost counselling to individuals, families, and groups who qualify. Services are delivered by counselling professionals and students in a professional, supervised environment.

MANTALK

Are you a man over the
age of 19 who has been
sexually abused?

Would you like to talk
to other men about that
shared experience?

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”
- Let us agree to make this a “culturally safe” space:
 - Allow each other space to ask sincere questions
 - Share from your experience
 - 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?

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**

What Is Culture?

- Culture is the collection of definitive beliefs, behaviors, artifacts, and other characteristics shared commonly among members of a group.
- Not just race and ethnicity. 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)
- Those in “majority” positions are less aware of culture than those in “minority” positions

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 competently.
- 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 specific systemic oppression.

Trauma Counselling and Cultural Competence – ex.

Psycho-social Dev. Vs. Racial Identity Dev.

Erikson's Stage Theory in its Final Version

<i>Age</i>	<i>Conflict</i>	<i>Resolution or "Virtue"</i>	<i>Culmination in old age</i>
Infancy (0-1 year)	Basic trust vs. mistrust	Hope	Appreciation of interdependence and relatedness
Early childhood (1-3 years)	Autonomy vs. shame	Will	Acceptance of the cycle of life, from integration to disintegration
Play age (3-6 years)	Initiative vs. guilt	Purpose	Humor; empathy; resilience
School age (6-12 years)	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competence	Humility; acceptance of the course of one's life and unfulfilled hopes
Adolescence (12-19 years)	Identity vs. Confusion	Fidelity	Sense of complexity of life; merging of sensory, logical and aesthetic perception
Early adulthood (20-25 years)	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love	Sense of the complexity of relationships; value of tenderness and loving freely
Adulthood (26-64 years)	Generativity vs. stagnation	Care	Caritas, caring for others, and agape, empathy and concern
Old age (65-death)	Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	Existential identity; a sense of integrity strong enough to withstand physical disintegration

Stage	Age	Critical Issue	Process for Resolution	Significant Relationship(s) & Resources
Pre-school	0-5yrs	comfort with visible racial differences	Adequate and enlightened physical care	primary physical caregiver
Early school	5-9yrs	understanding of personal equality & competence	Facilitated success in social and academic pursuits	extended family members/school personnel
Early adolescence	11-14yrs	ability to appropriately negotiate racial dynamics	Knowledge of history and politics of race	same race role models, culturally specific and anti-racist education
Later adolescence	15-18yrs	personal choices in context of race	family values re: race, sex, reproduction and vocation	role models, community censors and informal agents

The Challenges of Cultural Competence

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

A. Acknowledge Hostility

- Racism is North America's original sin
- The culture is hostile towards those who represent diversity
- Diverse folks are often dramatically overrepresented in incidence and underrepresented in treatment cohorts
- The wise therapist acknowledges this innate hostility and its clinical influence

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 socio-political environments producing different world views
- World view 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?

C. Social, Cultural and Historical Context

- US/Can fraught, complicated, tragic diversity history
 - African enslavement, Attempted genocide of First Nations, Global strife = trans-global migration, Homophobia, Transphobia, Ableism, Misogyny . . .
- A local knowledge of how this actively affects peoples today generally and the client specifically is important
- (Aylward, Critical Race Theory, “spot race issues”)

D. 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)

E. Communicating Across / About 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** (swiss philosopher and linguist)

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, the projection of confidence, and the capacity for humility. Ask questions authoritatively and not as a cultural tourist. Give space for client's corrective feedback. 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. The therapist should be transparent about these issues and model confidence to talk about cultural location.

Communicating Across/About Exercise

- Pair up
- 1st person ask the other: How do you identify in terms of race/culture/ethnicity? Discuss
- 2nd person asks: How do you identify in terms of sex/gender/orientation? Discuss
- What did it feel like asking the questions? What were your most effective follow up questions? Was self-disclosure necessary?

F. Understand Structural Oppression

- What have you/your agency done that demonstrates that you are committed to ending structural oppression?
- How are you/ is your agency perceived by diverse communities?

G. Inclusive Workplace

- How inclusive is your workplace?
- There is a significant difference between diversity and inclusion.
- An agency that does not have intentional programmes in place to promote inclusion and manage the tensions inherent in a diverse workplace cannot claim to be culturally competent in the delivery of its services.

Resources

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Final Questions



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