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Developing Cultural Competence: An Introduction to Human Service Students

Presented by:

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November 18, 1999

1. Introduction and program overview
2. Credo
3. What is Cultural Competence?
 - a. Wright, R. S. (1997). Developing cultural competence: the need for enhanced knowledge, values and skills in an increasingly divers America. Unpublished paper.
 - b. Green, J. W. (1992). Cultural awareness in the human services: a multi-ethnic approach. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
 - c. Cultural Competence: Some Propositions (adapted from: Sue, D. W. (1981). Counselling the culturally different. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
4. The Consequence of Cultural Incompetence
 - a. Kohl, H. (1994). I won't learn from you! Confronting student resistance. In B. Bigelow, L. Christensen, S. Karp, B. Miner, & B. Peterson (eds.), Rethinking our classrooms: teaching for equity and justice (pp. 134-135). Montgomery, AL: Rethinking Schools.
5. The Language of Cultural Difference
6. A Model for Understanding Cultural Difference
 - a. Adapted from: Nichols, E. (October, 1992). Philosophical perspective on cultural difference. Paper presented at the Summit. Paper presented at the meeting of the Nova Scotia Chapter of the Canadian Public Personnel Management Association, Halifax, Nova Scotia.
 - b. Selected cultural contrasts from Green, 1992.
7. Describing One's Own Culture
8. Gaining Concrete Knowledge
9. What About Proposition 5 - Cultural Pain and Racial Self-hatred
 - a. From: Bell, P. (1992). Cultural pain and African Americans: unspoken issues in early recovery. Center City, MN: Hazelden.



Nova Scotia Council for the Family

Credo

- 1. I believe that the central process of the helping relationship and related interventions is understanding.**
- 2. I believe that culture, class and race differences can present major barriers in the helping professional/client relationship.**
- 3. I believe it is the helping professional's responsibility to be aware of barriers to understanding and to use all available resources to bridge same.**

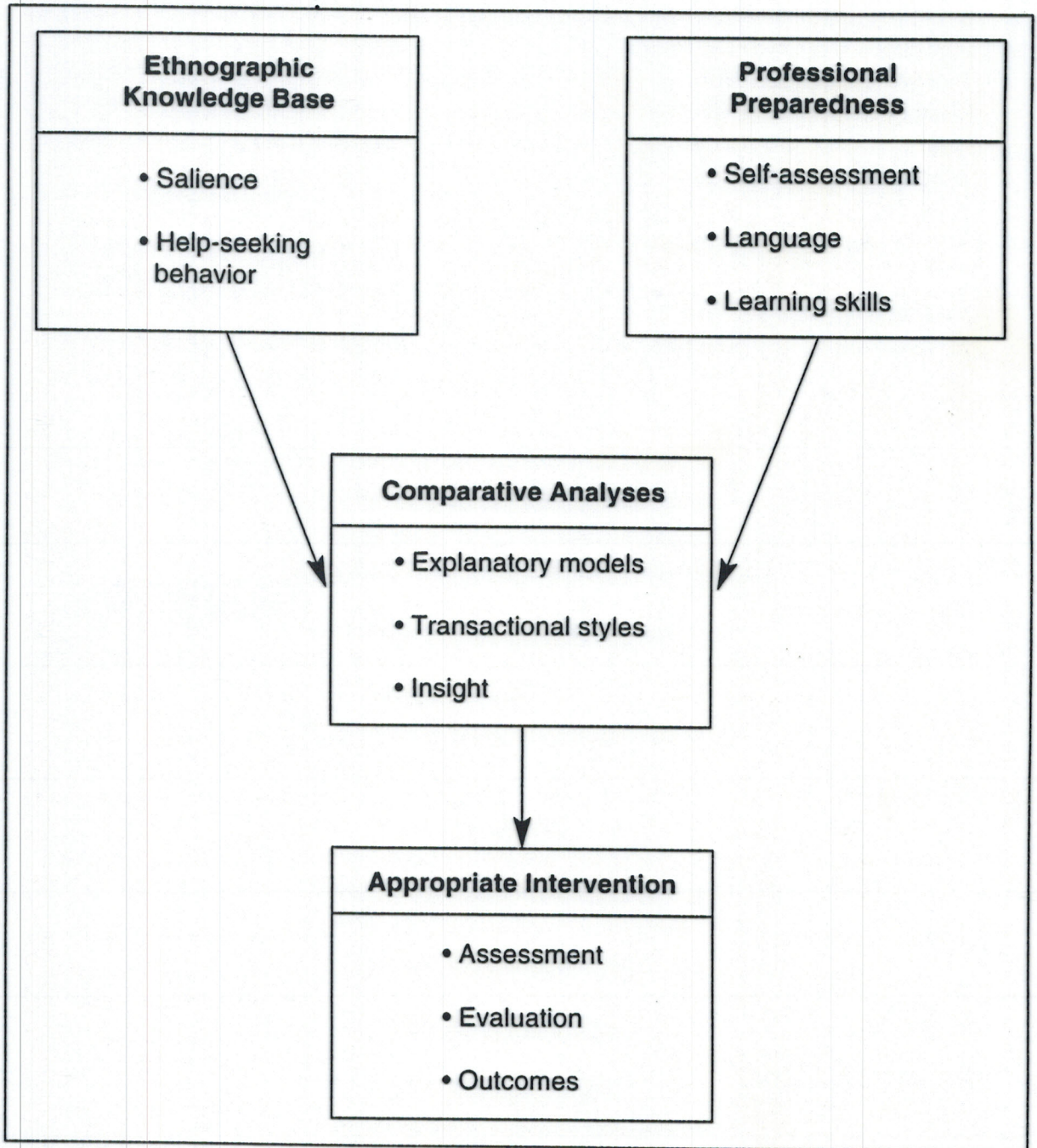


FIGURE 1.5 The ethnic competence model.

work. Articles in social service journals, statements of professional ethics, and the goals of workshops and training programs often sound as if all human service workers everywhere are fully aware of their biases and prejudices, have them under full control, and suffer no fear or anxiety of any kind when they are with minority clients. But when I go to training workshops and note what is being said and not said, when I discuss the problems of service delivery for minority clients with supervisors, when I listen to workers in minority directed and staffed agencies, I am forced to reconsider what I thought the professional position papers

The Language of Race and Ethnicity

In a small group of three students review the following list of several words and phrases and give one or two sentence definitions of each. Also indicate which words you believe to be outmoded. (Propositions 1, 2, 4, 6)

Race:

Ethnic/Ethnicity:

Culture:

Minority:

Prejudice:

Discrimination:

White:

Coloured:

Black:

African Canadian:

Caucasians:

European Canadian:

Homosexual:

Gay/Lesbian:

Indian:

Mi'kmaq:

Native:

Woman:

Lady:

Cultural Competence: Some Propositions

[There are several assumptions which underscore the importance of] the helping professional understanding and being able to share the view point and experience of their [clients and colleagues]. This statement does not mean helping professionals have to hold these points of view as their own. Rather it means that the helping professional is able to see and accept, in a non-judgmental manner, the legitimacy of alternative ways to view the world. This implies several things that are the essence of cultural competence:

1. The culturally skilled helping professional is one who has moved from being culturally unaware to becoming sensitive to their own cultural baggage.
2. The culturally skilled helping professional is aware of their own values and biases and how they may affect racially visible and culturally different clients.
3. The culturally skilled helping professional will have a good understanding of the way social and political systems operate in the United States and Canada with respect to the treatment of racially visible and culturally different persons.
4. A culturally skilled helping professional is one who is comfortable with differences that exist between the helping professional and others in terms of race and beliefs.
5. The culturally skilled helping professional is sensitive to circumstances (personal biases, stage of ethnic identity, socio-political influences, etc.) that may dictate referral of the racially visible or culturally different student to a member of their own race or culture.
6. The culturally skilled helping professional must possess specific knowledge and information about the particular groups they are working with.
7. The culturally skilled helping professional must have a clear and explicit knowledge and understanding of the generic characteristics

of professional helping and an understanding of how culture effects helping style.

8. The culturally skilled helping professional must be able to generate a wide variety of verbal and nonverbal responses.

9. The culturally skilled helping professional must be able to send and receive both verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and "appropriately"¹.

¹Loosely adapted from: Sue, Derald Wing, Counselling the Culturally Different, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1981 (pp. 104-106)

Ethnic Groups/ World View	Axiology (Values.)	Epistemology (knowledge)	Logic (reason)	Process
European Euro-American	Member - Object The highest value lies in the object or in the acquisition of the object.	Cognitive One knows through counting and measuring. linear+sequential parts become the whole.	Dichotomous Either/Or	Technology All sets are repeatable and reproducible.
African Afro-American Hispanics Arabs	Member - Member The highest value lies in the interpersonal relationship between people.	Affective One knows through symbolic imagery and rhythm. (function) wholistic.	Diunital The union of opposites.	Ntuology All sets are interrelated through human and spiritual networks.
Asian Asian-American Polynesian	Member - Group The highest value lies in the cohesiveness of the group.	Conative One knows through striving toward the transcendent. Connects part with the transcendent ideal.	Nyaya The objective world is conceived independent of thought and mind.	Cosmology All sets are independently interrelated in the harmony of the universe.
Native American	Member - Great Spirit The highest value lies in oneness with Great Spirit.	Intuitive One knows by generational trial + error that has developed keen instinct of the natural world.	Traditional All things are connected to fate or will of Great Spirit, What is - is. New phenomena are not readily adapted into logical construct.	Continuity/ Perpetuity All sets are the same; part of the unbroken continuum.

Items contained in a box represent the work of Robert S. Wright and should not be confused with the work of Dr. Nich

Describing One's Own Culture

Using Nichol's Philosophical Model of Cultural Competence, describe your own developing culture. Take 15 to 20 minutes to do this. Then we will spend 10 to 15 minutes dialoguing with a colleague to uncover our cultural differences. After this, we will return to large group and report on this experience. (Proposition 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9)

Name Your personal World View:

Axiology - Describe what is your highest value (what's most important to you, what motivates your daily actions):

Epistemology - Describe how it is that you come to know things. How do you know what is right?

Logic - When you're trying to find out what is real what kind of questions do you ask yourself? How do you line up your information in order to take meaning from it?

Process - If you were a country, how would you describe the "system of operations" that you use in the production of your "greatest export"? What is your most important product? How is it that you produce this?

Gaining Concrete Knowledge

Much has been discussed today in a philosophical way about cultural difference and cultural competence. How do we go from this discussion to find out specific information about the cultural groups with whom we will work? That is the final question of the day. There are several things you can do:

1. Develop a second culture - become bi-cultural. You can do this by developing a strong personal or professional relationship with a person of another culture. Be up front. Tell the person that the reason you are wanting to develop the relationship is so that you can learn to broaden your range of understanding and skill in another culture. Use this relationship to learn the finer points of another cultural world view. (Proposition 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9)
2. Read! Not only text books about cultural difference. Also read the literature of the cultural group that you are trying to understand. You can also watch the movies which attempt to accurately depict the group. Be careful when you do this that you are seeking out first-voice media (stuff that is written, produced and directed by members of the cultural group depicted). Otherwise you may just be getting exposed to the prejudices of the author/director. (Propositions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9)
3. Seek out training such as was offered to you today. I believe that in your future workplace there will be many cultural sensitivity/anti-harassment training sessions offered. Make use of them. You may think that this goes without saying, but in my experience, those who could value most from these workshops are the last persons to attend. Don't you be among that group! (Proposition 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9)
4. Attend cultural activities in your community. Remember that Martin Luther King Junior day is in January. February is Black History Month, October is Mi'kmaq History Month, Christmas occurs roughly around the same time as Hanukah, the Month of Ramadan changes slightly from year to year but is well publicized in the news. (Proposition 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9)

Cultural Pain & Racial Issues

Cultural pain is when we feel insecure, embarrassed, angry, confused, torn, apologetic, uncertain, or inadequate because of conflicting expectations of and pressures from being a minority and an African American.

- Resentment when another African American seems to be denying his or her blackness.
- Discomfort when another African American uses black English in the presence of white people.
- Embarrassment when a white person tries to act black.
- Discomfort when a white person is patronizing on racial issues.
- Anxiety when a white person seems to expect us to explain or defend questionable behavior by other African Americans.
- Anxiety when we wonder if we have done enough for the African American community.

Discussing racial issues when both African Americans and whites are present usually creates an undercurrent of tension. Shelby Steele describes this dynamic as a struggle for innocence (Shelby Steele, "I'm Black, You're White, Who's Innocent?" *Harper's* (June 1988):45-53.). Neither African Americans nor whites want to feel responsible for the current problems in the African American community; both groups attempt to maintain their "innocence" for causing or contributing to these problems.

White people tend to see the problem as one of class. Their position is that this is America where, with hard work and self-discipline, people can "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." If people are poor and uneducated, it is the result of their own lack of effort. Seeing the problem as one of class allows many white people to maintain their innocence.

Many African Americans, on the other hand, tend to see the problem as one of racism, which keeps us down and denies us opportunities. Seeing the problem as caused by racism allows us as African Americans to maintain our innocence.¹

¹ Peter Bell, Cultural Pain and African Americans: Unspoken Issues in Early Recovery, (1992, Hazelden Educational Materials.)pp.8-11.

Racial Self-Hate

This is often the result of negative stereotypes assigned to African Americans.

Some of us may feel ashamed of the supposed lack of progress in parts of the African American community. We may feel the need to justify or explain our community's tragic realities, such as crime, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, breakdown of the family, and illiteracy. Should we take responsibility for every problem or issue that exists in black America? No. But feeling that we must may overwhelm us.

One of the most difficult and painful issues for African Americans is the extent to which we have adopted a "white" standard of beauty by valuing straight hair, light complexions, and sharp features. How we feel about the standards of physical beauty may have a major impact on our lives. It may determine how we think of ourselves, our body, our clothes, our mannerisms. If we do feel conflict about these areas, and don't acknowledge and attempt to resolve that conflict, it may continue to cause us emotional pain.

It hurts us emotionally when we assess our worth in terms of how closely we approximate "whiteness." We need to value our traits and characteristics without defensiveness. We should acknowledge shame where we have felt it so that we can resolve it.

Black pride is neither an idle phrase nor an antiwhite concept. Black pride is rediscovering the values that embrace our heritage and community.¹

¹ Peter Bell, Cultural Pain and African Americans: Unspoken Issues In Early Recovery, (1992, Hazelden Educational Materials.)pp.14-15.

Robert S. Wright, MSW, RSW
A Brief Biography

Robert is a registered social worker (RSW) with experience and education in areas of Child Welfare, Education, Mediation, Correctional Mental Health, Psychological Assessment, Cultural Competence and Forensics. He has a master's degree in social work, a certificate in divorce mediation theory, is qualified to administer a wide variety of psychometric tests, and is a registered private practitioner with the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers. He carries practice endorsements in the fields of Direct Practice (with individuals, groups and families) and Forensics. He is employed full-time with Family and Children's Services of Cumberland County where he currently serves as the Acting Executive Director. He also maintains a small private practice.

Robert received both his undergraduate and graduate training in social work from christian universities (Atlantic Union College in So. Lancaster, MA and Walla Walla College in College Place, WA). He is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian and an ordained elder who preaches, teaches, leads spiritual retreats and provides his professional services pro bono qualified individual and non-profit agencies as a regular part of his spiritual ministry. Robert is married to Sondra Cox-Wright. He and his wife have a daughter Maya and live on a small farm in Cumberland County, Nova Scotia