Providing treatment services to a culturally diverse population

By Teri Davis, MS, LPC, CDC-I
About Me

- Born & raised in Bethel
- Cultural minority
- Education
- Experience
- Professional qualifications
Objectives

- Increase awareness of cultural diversity
- Learn about norms, communication styles and body language consistent with Alaska Native populations
- Learn how to incorporate cultural values and activities into treatment plans.
How do you define culture?
What is culture?

“Culture is defined as the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group.” (Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition)
What is culture?

“Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.” (UNESCO)
Multicultural Counseling

- **Multicultural counseling** is defined as a counseling relationship between a counselor and client who adhere to different cultural systems.

- Very common in rural Alaska and other high demand areas
Why is this topic important?

- ACA (2005) Code of Ethics compel counselors to ensure that their cultural values and biases do not override those of the client.

- Self-awareness- how are you and your skills perceived, understood and responded to by your client.

- Cultural Knowledge- understanding the culture of the clients you are working with or be open to learning about it.
Cultures represented in Alaska
For the purposes of this session

- Alaska Native (Yup’ik) culture will be the focus
- Disclaimer
- Learning curve
Central Yup’ik Eskimo

- Southwestern Alaska
- 68 Yup’ik villages
- 10,000-16,000 speakers
- 17 of 68 villages teach Yup’ik as first language in schools
- *yuk* 'person' plus *pik* 'real'
- Chevak -referred to as Cup'ik
- Nunivak as Cup'ig

(UAF)
Language

- The number of Yup’ik speakers is steadily decreasing
- Student filmmakers from LKSD
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiKKvXW6EnY
Discussion

• Comments on the video
• Notice the Yup’ik elder said, “don’t be embarrassed, even though there are white people around we can speak our language”
• Encourage your clients to speak their preferred language
• Challenge language barriers
  -office staff
  -paperwork
  -signs
  -translators
Communication Styles

- Voice tone
- Volume - Quiet
- Speed - Slow
- Grammar (he, she, it, we, they, etc)
- Simple
- No metaphors
- Silence
Common misunderstandings/ assumptions

- Voice tone = aggressive, disrespectful
- Volume - quiet = uninterested, unsure
- Speed - slow = unintelligent
- Grammar - misuse = disrespect, uneducated
- Silence - understanding, no questions, acceptance
What to do

- Slow down
- Use plain, non-psychiatric language
- Show or draw pictures
- Limit the amount of information provided at one time
- Use the “teach-back” method
- Create a shame-free environment that encourages questions and participation
- Don’t assume silence means what you think it does
- Don’t use metaphors
Body Language/Appearance

- Eye contact - minimal
- Greeting - physical contact with strangers
- Physical appearance - relaxed
- Physical space - to strangers: children (less) adults (more)
Common misunderstandings/assumptions

- Eye contact - disrespect, distracted
- Greeting - rude, not socialized
- Physical appearance - depressed, disheveled, dirty
What to do

- Be yourself
- Be open
- Acknowledge it if you notice certain body language and you don’t know what it means
- Be a learner
- Don’t take it personally
- Ask questions
- Look for similarities and common ground
Values Common to all Alaska Native cultures

- **Show Respect to Others** - Each Person Has a Special Gift
  - Share what you have - Giving Makes You Richer
- **Know Who You Are** - You Are a Reflection on Your Family
- **Accept What Life Brings** - You Cannot Control Many Things
  - Have Patience - Some Things Cannot Be Rushed
- **Live Carefully** - What You Do Will Come Back to You
- **Take Care of Others** - You Cannot Live without Them
- **Honor Your Elders** - They Show You the Way in Life
  - Pray for Guidance - Many Things Are Not Known
  - See Connections - All Things Are Related
Specific Yup’ik Values

Love for Children
Respect for Others
Sharing
Humility
Hard work
Spirituality
Cooperation
Family Roles
Knowledge of family tree
Knowledge of Language
Hunter Success
Domestic Skills
Avoid conflict
Humor
Respect For Land
Respect For Nature
Values

- Can anyone see how anything listed here could impact the therapeutic process, either negatively or positively?
Examples

- **Humility** - that they may not be deserving of help or that they’re not “worth” the counselor’s time.
- **Spirituality** - importance of including spirituality in the counseling process
- **Family roles** - influences stigma, expectations, means some members of families will be less likely to seek services
- **Avoid conflict** - encourages forgiveness, avoid addressing issues within families in case of conflict
Tribe mentality

- Forgiveness
- “Takes a village”
- Banishment
- Tribe mentality vs. individual moral code
- Hierarchy of needs
Clinical presentation example-

**Depression**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yup’ik</th>
<th>Caucasian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>observable irritability</td>
<td>flat affect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bereavement</td>
<td>tearful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less verbal expression of symptoms, minimizing severity</td>
<td>Verbal description of symptoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same movement speed as usual</td>
<td>slow movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of others observations</td>
<td>Physical pain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strengths and Supports

- Pride and participation in one's culture
- Social skills, traditions, knowledge, and practical skills specific to the client's culture
- Bilingual or multilingual skills
- Traditional, religious, or spiritual practices, beliefs, and faith
- Generational wisdom
- Extended families and non-blood kinships
- Ability to maintain cultural heritage and practices
- Perseverance in coping with racism and oppression
- Culturally specific ways of coping
- Community involvement and support

(National Center for Biotechnology Information)
During treatment

- How To Use the LEARN Mnemonic
  - Listen
  - Explain
  - Acknowledge
  - Recommend
  - Negotiate
Treatment Planning Considerations

- Goals must be realistic in context of geography, resources and client motivation

- Objectives must be culturally appropriate, meaningful and reasonable

- Interventions, activities and skills must be do-able and helpful to bigger systems as well as the individual

- Failure to consider these leads to lower adherence, poor outcomes, patient dissatisfaction, provider frustration
Use interventions that are culturally relevant

- Elders
- Priests
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Water hauling
- Collecting wood
- Eskimo dancing
Treatment planning examples

**Typical Goals:**
- Client will learn to cope with stress in a healthy manner
- Client will make a commitment to sobriety
- Client will develop healthy eating and exercise habits
- ETC.

**Typical Objectives (culturally relevant):**
- Client will participate in one subsistence food gathering activity per week
- Client will join son in water hauling trip once per day
- Client will call, text or visit Elder John when he experiences a craving for alcohol
- Client will shoot 15 free throws and do 10 layups if he begins to feel angry, before reacting
“I am Yup’ik”

- [http://www.sundance.org/projects/i-am-yup-ik](http://www.sundance.org/projects/i-am-yup-ik)

- Example of how basketball is his main coping skill, his escape, the thing he can rely on to manage the depression, suicides, and trauma occurring in their village.

- Imagine if this child went to counseling and the counselor didn’t acknowledge sports in any way, and focused their treatment plan on “typical” treatment interventions. That counselor would have missed the main activity this child connects with.
Take away message

- Be yourself
- Be open
- Be honest
- Acknowledge what you don’t know
- Ask questions
- Be a lifelong learner
- Observe
- Consider what you’re documenting
- Consider culture when treatment planning
- OTHERS??
Who will share an experience they have had working with a client from a different culture than their own?
Please feel free to ask questions 😊
References


Google Images- all pictures included in presentation


Sundance Institute
http://www.sundance.org/projects/i-am-yup-ik

The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA). http://carla.umn.edu/culture/definitions.html


University of Alaska Fairbanks, Alaska Native Knowledge Network- http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/ANCR/Values/yupik.html

YouTube. Iksdmedia - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1KKvXW6EnY

Yup'ik, Central Alaskan | Alaska Native Language Center-https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/languages/cy/

Thank you!

Please feel free to contact me anytime

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