Briefly, how is Cultural Humility different from Cultural Competency?
A: Yes, excellent question. They are very similar, but I would say that cultural humility is more centered on oneself, developing respectful relationships beyond just counseling or clinical encounters and it also focuses on power in society and how that impacts who we are and the relationships we have with others more broadly. Power and privilege in society are very powerful forces in the development of relationships with others.

To me, cultural competence, at least most definitions, focuses on helping people be better situated to respond in the counseling/clinical encounter through the acquisition of knowledge, self-awareness (like cultural humility), but also the implementation of skills and skill development. Most cultural competency definitions are context specific and focused. Again, this is all a matter of personal perspective as there are many who would also use this term to mean something very similar to cultural humility. It is very personal. To make matters more complicated, I am not a fan of the term cultural competency and I prefer the term cultural responsiveness, when speaking about preparing folks to serve culturally diverse others. To me, cultural competency implies an end point. There is an implication that one becomes “competent” and I and many others, would argue that there is no end-point, but it is a life-long process, much like cultural humility is for me. Again, much of this comes down to personal preference and one’s own conceptualization of the process and its implications.

To me, cultural humility is not so focused on how to prepare someone to work therapeutically, but more about how we form relationships with other more broadly, which ultimately impacts how we form relationships with those we serve.

Doesn’t CBRI assume fair play (we all start life with the same advantages) instead of fair share (more equitable advantages/disadvantages)? This reinforces individualism (you can make it if you try) instead of addressing institutionalized racism (barriers and disparities), correct?
A: I do not think CBRI assumes fair play or fair share, actually if I am understanding your question correctly. In fact, it is argued in the literature in this area that there is ample evidence to suggest that we do not all start with the same advantages. It is hard to separate out these two because if the assumption is that we do not start with the same advantages, then there is also an implied assumption that there was not equity either. In fact, we are trying to argue against the idea of pulling your boot straps up mentality to address the notion that societal and institutional racism are very strong components to the inequity amongst communities in society. I would say that we are actually attempting to move away from assuming that individuals are flawed, but rather the context in which they find themselves is a culprit and needs to be addressed if we are to really understand people and their life circumstances. Hope this helps and makes sense. If not, please keep asking me clarification questions.