# The paradox that works: Looking within as a first step to becoming culturally competent

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## Workshop Overview

- Goal of the workshop
- Introductions
  Who is here?
- How our time together will go…….
  Seminar is process heavy, and personally focused

## What is Cultural Competence?

- Multicultural competence is defined as the ability to understand and constructively relate to the uniqueness of each client in light of the diverse cultures that influence each person's perspectives (Stuart, 2004).
- Most clinicians have an intellectual appreciation of the salience of diversity factors in the therapeutic context, and are motivated to be sensitive to these issues in their own practice.
- A general appreciation of diversity factors does not equate to a clear understanding of whether, when, and how to bring up these issues in the actual practice of clinical work.

## NAADAC Code of Ethics

- V. Working in a Culturally Diverse World
- An addiction professional understands the significance of the role that ethnicity and culture plays in an individual's perceptions and how he or she lives in the world. Addiction professionals shall remain aware that many individuals have disabilities which may or may not be obvious. Some disabilities are invisible and unless described might not appear to inhibit expected social, work and health care interactions. Included in the invisible disabled category are those persons who are hearing impaired, have a learning disability, have a history of brain or physical injuries and those affected by chronic illness. Persons having such limitations might be younger than age 65. Part of the intake and assessment must then include a question about any additional factor that must be considered when working with the client.

## 2002 APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct: Competence

2.01 Boundaries of Competence

(b) Where scientific or professional knowledge in the discipline of psychology establishes that an understanding of factors associated with age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status is essential for effective implementation of their services or research, psychologists have or obtain the training, experience, consultation, or supervision necessary to ensure the competence of their services.

## Authentic Cultural Competence

When our work is rooted in an on-going awareness of our worldview, our sense of privilege and power, and the impact and experience of our own identities, rather than starting from knowledge of "the other".

## Authentic Cultural Competence

- Doing this work will prevent us from doing a cookbook, recipe style of counseling.
- Authentic, cultural competency comes from a visceral understanding of what is important about this material, because we've experienced that value for ourselves.
- From this lived experience, you can interact with more spontaneity, flexibility, genuineness, empathy, and respect for the person or people sitting across from you.

## Elements of the clinician's cultural competence

- Awareness and acceptance of difference
  - Every encounter is multicultural (Comas-Díaz, 2012)
- Awareness of own cultural values
  - Understanding of "personal and professional cultural icebergs" (Comas-Díaz, 2012)
  - Professional/theoretical cultural iceberg = how were/are you professionally socialized, how does your theoretical orientation influence your worldview, what is my sense of the relationship between culture and clinical practice
- Understanding dynamics of difference
  - How different dimensions of identity relate to each other within the client, and between you and the client
  - Recognize that we tend to ignore or minimize our agent identity dimensions as "cultural"

## Elements of the clinician's cultural competence

- Development of cultural knowledge
  - Know the dominant or agent cultural identities
  - Get to know culturally diverse people in deeper ways
  - Understand how geography impacts how one experiences their cultural identities
  - How does language mediate ethnic identity
  - Realize that race (and colorism) is a significant issue in the U.S.
- Ability to adapt practice to the cultural context of client
  - Evaluate your professional socialization in terms of flexibility to work with differences
  - Evaluate your theoretical orientation with respect to working with differences

## Caterpillars & Snails

What happens we don't realize that our perspective...

Is OUR perspective!

Caterpillars & Snails

## Optimal Learning Environment

- Rewards
- Risks
- Overcoming

## Worldview

- "We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are" (sometimes credited to Anaïs Nin, sometimes credited to The Talmud)
- A way of describing the universe and life within it, both in terms of what is and what ought to be.
- A set of beliefs that includes limiting statements and assumptions regarding what exists and what does not (either in actuality, or in principle), what objects or experiences are good or bad, and what objectives, behaviors, and relationships are desirable or undesirable.
- Defines what can be known or done in the world, and how it can be known or done.

## Privilege & Power

**Privilege** is a right or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor. (Merriam-Webster, 2014)

"(White) **privilege** is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks", from Peggy McIntosh (1988) "White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack".

## Privilege, Power, & Oppression

"As a concept, privilege is defined in relational terms and in reference to social groups, and involves unearned benefits afforded to powerful social groups within systems of oppression (Kendall, 2006; McIntosh, 1988). Furthermore, it challenges commonly held beliefs in the existence of meritocracy…" (from Case, Luzzini, & Hopkins, 2012, p. 3)

## Identities

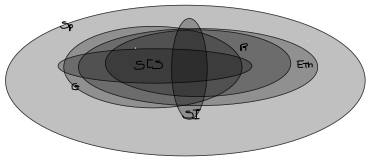
- Race
- Ethnicity
- SES
- Gender Identity
- Sexual Orientation/Identity
- Religion/Spirituality

- Possibly add one more

## Circles

- What meaning does this have for your clinical work?

## Applying this to work with clients: Victor




## Applying this to work with clients: Victor

Victor is a 35 y.o. African American male doctoral student in the Political Science department and he is working on his dissertation. He is a teaching assistant with one of his professors with whom he co-teaches a course taken by most sophomores majoring in Political Science. Victor is a member of the Graduate Student Therapy Group and they met last night. He comes in today after having a very difficult group session in which he felt dismissed by a fellow group member after finally sharing his experience with racism on campus and in his program. Victor is still feeling very distressed over the exchange and he is asking to meet with an individual counselor as soon as possible to process his feelings. He has to teach his class this evening and isn't sure he can do it given how he feels right now.

Here is what happened…

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzLTyp0ZBx4
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vAbpJW_xEc
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nmhAJYxFT4

## First Thoughts?

## Wrapping Up

## Recommendations for Next Steps

- Continue self exploration – focusing on identifying your own cultural worldview (which includes all the identity dimensions).
- Continue to uncover your cultural icebergs.
- Recognize the dynamic interplay between the identities in the student-staff.
- Examine the role of power and privilege and how it informs your work.

## Questions

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