Decolonizing Addiction Treatment: Cultural Responsiveness for the Black Diaspora

Mr. Kervins Clement, LCMHC, LCASA, CSAT, CRT-IT, NCC, CFLE
Dr. Danna Demezier, PhD, LMHC, NCC

Rev. angel Kyodo williams exercise for connection

(Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, 2016)
Why is providing culturally responsive treatment important?

If you don't know my history and my story, then you can't help me. You might cause me harm similar to other people in my life.

Dynamics Within the Counseling Room

- Differences: 33.3%
- Power: 33.3%
- Privilege: 33.3%
Defining Culture

“Membership in a socially constructed way of living, which incorporates collective values, beliefs, norms, boundaries, and lifestyles that are cocreated with others who share similar worldviews comprising biological, psychosocial, historical, psychological, and other factors” (ACA, 2014, p. 20)

“The total socially acquired life-way or life-style of a group of people. It consists of the patterned, repetitive ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that are characteristic of the members of a particular society or segment of a society” (Harris, 1997)
Here are the identities that shape my life.

What are the identities that shape your life?

Drop the cultural identities that shape your life in the chat.

Panethnic Limitations

- A lack of differentiation in ethnic groups obscures differences specific to subgroups.
- For the Black Diaspora, the term African American encompasses:
  - Blacks with ancestral roots to Africa; native-born people in U.S. (African American)
  - Foreign-born English speakers from Jamaica & Trinidad; foreign-born non-English speakers from Caribbean (Afro-Caribbean immigrant)
  - Individuals from African subcontinent (African immigrant)
- Black people identify as having more in common with those in their subgroups.
Despite the increase in opioid use and overdose deaths in the Black community, they are less likely to receive substance use treatment and more likely to be criminalized for their substance use disorder (James & Jordan, 2018)

Barriers in Addiction Treatment

Access
Black people are accessing addiction treatment at a significant lower rate than their counterparts

Cultural Narratives
The stigmas and untrust that Black people navigate while pursuing addiction treatment

Cultural Responsiveness
The treatment that Black people receive when they finally get into addiction treatment

Black Church
The church is a place of refuge and safety for the Black community
From Awareness to Action

- Mental health care inequalities exist (Tadros & Owens, 2021)
- A lack of cultural responsiveness is identified for diverse populations (Alvarez et al., 2022)
- Cultural knowledge
  - Informs the clinical formulation, hypothesis, and diagnosis
  - Enhances relationships
  - Generates better clinical outcomes in clients
- Empowers the client in the counseling room

Decolonizing the Counseling Profession

- The United States is diverse and continues to become diverse over time
- Traditional, or Western, counseling theories take a Eurocentric view which may not consider distinct experiences of underrepresented populations
- Diverse clients who engage in counseling services may experience harm if counseling experiences are oppressive and/or not culturally sensitive (Wendt et al., 2005)
- Culturally responsive counseling honors the cultural identity of clients and supports treatment outcomes in racially and ethnically diverse underrepresented populations, such as Black clients
Decolonizing addiction treatment considers the lived experiences of Black people and the factors which impact their addiction, treatment utilization, and outcome.

- **Social determinants of health (SDOH)**
  - Impacts addictive behavior
    - Neighborhood, access to care, adverse childhood experiences, SES, stress exposure, social relationships
  - Improves treatment outcomes
    - Providing transportation for clients in opioid treatment improved treatment outcomes (Clement, 2023)

---

**Culturally Responsive Equation**

- **Cultural Sensitivity**: Acknowledging the cultural differences between your client and yourself
- **Cultural Humility**: Pursing understanding of the complexity of identities a client has

= **Culturally Responsive Treatment**: All people despite their background feel safe, welcomed, and supported to show their whole self

(Clement, 2023)
The Multidimensional Model of Broaching Behavior (MMBB)

**Intracounseling:** The counselor’s acknowledgment of similarities and differences, and exploration of interpersonal processes that govern the counselor-client relationship.

**Intraindividual:** The counselor’s acknowledgment of the confluence of identity dimensions that operate, such as race, gender, class, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, immigrant status, and occupation.

**Intra-REC:** The counselor’s acknowledgment of within-group concerns that may arise between the client and people with whom he or she shares a common heritage.

**Inter-REC:** The counselor’s acknowledgment of the client’s encounters with racism and discrimination, as well as other forms of oppression that create distress for the client.

(Day-Vines et al., 2020)

**Literature Review**

- Impacts (Positively) client satisfaction and attention to SDOH improves treatment outcomes.
- Clients felt the treatment plan was tailored to their unique situation.
- Culturally responsive treatment is necessary to affect positive change.
- Diverse interventions improve the counseling experience.
- Strengthen therapeutic rapport between counselor and client.
- Lack of culturally informed treatment impacts experience in Black adults with SUDs.
- Seeking understanding of cultural factors often lead to strengths that can be integrated in the client’s treatment.
- Culturally responsive counselors are those who explore issues of racial and ethnic differences.
- Integrating cultural factors in evidence-based treatment does not reduce the quality of care or its effectiveness.
- Client feels seen and understood within their cultural environment.
- Race impacts how individuals connect with each other.
- Consideration and thoughtfulness to language and culture enhances the value of counseling.
Guidelines for Developing a Culturally Responsive Environment

- **Guideline #1:**
  - Conduct a thorough culturally-informed but person-specific functional assessment of presenting problem

- **Guideline #2:**
  - Engage in self-education about specific cultural norms and consult the literature for culture-specific treatment techniques

- **Guideline #3:**
  - Ensure adequate and effective training of therapists in cross-cultural competency

- **Guideline #4:**
  - Explore the client’s perspective on both seeking psychological treatment, and the nature of the therapeutic relationship

(Asnaani & Hofmann, 2012)
Guidelines for Developing a Culturally Responsive Environment (Cont.)

- **Guideline #5:**
  - Be aware of the importance of respect in the cross-cultural therapy setting

- **Guideline #6:**
  - Identify and incorporate client’s culturally-related strengths and resources into treatment

- **Guideline #7:**
  - Identify and utilize technique-specific cultural modifications

(Asnaani & Hofmann, 2012)

Culturally Informed Addiction Treatment

- A pilot study of a church-based substance abuse treatment intervention had promising results (Jordan et al., 2021).

- Black pride, ethnic identity, spirituality and religion supported recovery and represented by the Church.

- Black identity, heritage, and the Black experience were important for participants in the treatment intervention.
Case Study

- Denzel is a Black, African American, cisgender, able-bodied man. He was raised in the North and came from a family who was in poverty. Denzel was raised as a Christian and he is still a devout believer. Denzel started counseling Beyonce, who was in an open relationship. Beyonce is a Black, Haitian, cisgender, able-bodied woman who suffered from racial trauma and sexual abuse. Her perpetrator was by a Black man. Beyonce was raised in the South and does not identify as a Christian. Her sexual trauma occurred from someone in leadership at the church. Beyonce comes from a family of wealth. Beyonce is coming in because she is struggling with substance use disorder and her life is deeply being impacted by it.

What are important cultural dynamics as related to marginalization, privilege, race, religion/faith, and other factors?

How do you address the cultural dynamics that are in the counseling space?
Resources

- **Faces and Voices of Recovery Organization** (Recovery Stories of Frederick Douglass and and Malcolm X)
- **NAADAC Webinar**
- **Online Museum of African American Addictions, Treatment, and Recovery**
  - https://www.museumofafricanamericanaddictionsrecovery.org/books
- **The Pew Charitable Trusts** (Dr. Scott Nolen’s article on African Americans and Substance Use Treatment)
Thanks!
Do you have any questions?

Kervins Clement
kervinsclement@yahoo.com

Dr. Danna Demezier
ddemezieder@hotmail.com

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by Slidesgo, including icons by Flaticon, infographics & images by Freepik