



“Cultural Humility and Responsiveness and the Mental Health Professional”

Key Takeaways

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This workshop will focus on learning how to demonstrate cultural humility and responsiveness in organizational culture, Mental Health practices, service provision, and strategies. Participants will learn to acknowledge and improve awareness about decisions, actions, and policies that are shaped by their personal cultural perspective. The goal is for participants to develop an orientation and active engagement towards increased understanding and the process of transitioning to more open and understanding workplace environments.

- Learn ways to validate the experience of others while identifying your own “blind spots” to increase empathy for those we serve.
- Acknowledge the need for cultural awareness and understanding, through self-reflection to create change and more supportive workplace environments.
- Develop the ability to reframe interactions with others as one of collaborative equals.

“Cultural differences should not separate us from each other, but rather cultural diversity brings a collective strength that can benefit all of humanity.”- Robert Alan

Diverse Tapestry

“Tell me some things about you that I can’t find out on Google...”

Relationships are externally facing but its successes require internal work

Question for Reflection: How do you add the diverse tapestry of the Northwest BH providers?

Cultural Humility and Responsiveness vs Cultural Competence

“Cultural humility means admitting that one does not know and is willing to learn from patients about their experiences, while being aware of one’s own embeddedness in culture(s). While competence



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suggests mastery, humility refers to an intrapersonal and interpersonal approach that cultivates person-centered care.” -National Institute of Health

“I’m curious about who you are.” vs. “I know who you are already.”

Person Centered Approaches: 1) You are the expert of your experience 2) The facts are friendly

Authenticity: Remember, there are often different power dynamics and cultural expectations are always playing out... that we may be unaware of.

Cultural tailoring: *Every person needs a unique and personalized approach to being engaged in the therapeutic process.* While it does take more energy AND self-awareness to pay attention to the identity and culture of the person talking, it builds a more authentic connection.

Cultural relativity: Affirming and acknowledging that everyone sees, experiences, and engages the world differently **depending on how they were socialized.**

Self-awareness: Recognition of who we are, while respecting others’ recognition of who they are

Question for Reflection: What is Culture? How important is your culture to you? How important do you believe culture is to the people you serve?

Effective Communication

Our Goals for Effective Communication

1. Listen better (Acquire information)
2. Process better (Understand information)
3. Respond better (Relay information)

Questions for Reflection: What’s the point of active listening? How do we know our messages are reaching the intended target?

Relationship FIRST

“Culture is a relationship-based thing...”

Reciprocal Accountability: Relationship building goes both ways

Two-way Intentionality: What do you want to get from the interactions?

Finding Commonalities

Be Deliberate: Speaking with a purpose



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Asking the RIGHT questions: Identify their concerns, not what you think their concerns are

Listen Actively to Learn: Be curious, not interrogative... remember, they are the expert of their experience

Laugh at Yourself: If you make an unintentional mistake, don't beat yourself up about it, but acknowledge your ignorance, share a laugh, and move on

Finding Commonalities Process

1. Make them feel heard
2. Express your perspective
3. Offer an alternative, if needed
4. Listen for Feedback

Questions for Reflection: Where are the opportunities for connection? How are we maximizing the opportunities to connect that we currently have?

Shared Solutions

"Inclusivity is first and foremost about emotional safety, which is different from equity (that's more about equal opportunity). The core of inclusivity is about bringing people together and fostering a sense of belonging and community, which can create a ripple effect of emotional and social benefits."

Potential questions to ask clients: How can I better understand you? Tell me about your culture? What are some of your traditions?

Questions for Reflection: What does inclusivity even mean? Why is inclusivity so important?

Common Unity

We build community through communication

What is community? How do you create community?

1. Stay vulnerable and curious
2. Identify the barriers to connection then identify parallels in experiences to make connections
3. Practice Empathy i.e. "I feel you", putting yourself in another's shoes *as best you can*

Questions for Reflection: How does it feel to explain your culture? What are we currently doing that creates barriers to understanding? What are some of the barriers to community?

Find Commonalities to build Community



References and Resources

Diversity Fatigue: <https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/10.1287/orms.2024.01.04/full/>

The Importance of Connection: [Human Connection: Why It's Important | Psych Central](#)

The Center for Cultural Humility at UC Berkeley: <https://www.humilitycenter.org/>

For more information and trainings, please contact:

Northwest MHTTC: <https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/content/northwest-mhttc>

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