

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE COUNSELING PRACTICES

PRESENTED BY DR. PATRICIA ARREDONDO | FEBRUARY 17, 2022
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ISSUE IMPORTANCE

Counselors have the privilege of working with individuals and families from various backgrounds, intersecting identities, and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. Deliberately incorporating culturally responsive care in mental health settings can help ensure that individuals have access to treatment that meets their needs.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Clinicians are responsible for cultural competency, humility, and responsive practices.

The development of cultural competency & cultural humility begins with self-awareness.

This requires active, continual learning and openness.

It is not a static process.

A clinician's cultural perceptions and biases impact an individual's care.



IMPORTANT TERMS

Cultural Humility

- A journey that involves reflection on one's life story, critical consciousness & an educational lens.
- It also requires continual attention to how one enters and engages in mutual relationships, as well as to power differentials (context & how privilege benefits and/or adversely impacts).

Cultural Competency Development

- An on-going learning process requiring self-awareness on multiple levels, emotional intelligence, curiosity to learn about others, adaptation, perspective-taking, skill development, openness to change, and respect for differences.
- Not static. It is active learning.

Culturally Responsive Approach

- Requires practitioners be aware of & attuned to various belief systems, employing knowledge and skills every step of the way.
- There are 3 steps to achieving a culturally responsive approach:
 - **Step 1:** Awareness of Cultural Values & Biases About Others
 - **Step 2:** Awareness of a Diversity of Worldviews
 - **Step 3:** Engaging in Culturally Responsive Behaviors (see p.2)



BEST PRACTICES

Operating from a Strengths-Based Perspective

- **Think analytically** about the client and their family: history, sociopolitical context, development stage(s), career/life goals.
 - Do perspective-taking.
- See individuals with their **multiple dimensions of identity** (below), not just national heritage:
 - work with the entire person
 - help them to recognize their assets: how they have done it before.
- Be **empathetic**.
- Be solution-focused and pragmatic.

Other Ways to Effectively Engage Clients

- **Story-telling** may be a way to engage clients who are unfamiliar with counseling
- Think about what best builds relationships!
- Have a caring demeanor.
- Always discuss **family** (here and there)
- **Affirm** individual, family, and cultural coping mechanisms; ask about traditions and how they get through the tough times.
- Assist in **stress management**.

Dimensions of Personal Identity

A Dimensions	B Dimensions	C Dimensions
Age Culture Ethnicity Gender Identity Language Physicality/Mental Well Being Race Sexual Orientation Social Class	Educational Background Geographic Location Health Practices/Beliefs Hobbies/Recreation Military Experience Political Worldview Relationship Status Religion/Spirituality Work Experience	Historical Moments/Eras Sociopolitical Climate <i>While the 'A' dimensions are more visible, and dimensions 'B' and 'C' are more invisible, both are very much part of an individual.</i>

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