




# Understanding the Essence of Cultural Sensitivity in Trauma and Mental Health with Racial Minorities

Norris DuPree Jr., Phd  
MFT, Psych., LADC



# Goals & Objectives

To understand the barriers to culturally responsive services

To examine socio-cultural factors in counseling that affect intervention strategies

To explore how racial identity development, socioeconomic status, language, and culture impact the counseling process

# I'm Not Different... You Are



Conventional Mental Health  
Service Delivery: The Case  
of the Well-Meaning  
Counselor

Underutilization of Services  
by Ethnic Minorities is  
Pervasive Across Multiple  
Settings, i.e. Community  
Agencies, Schools, and  
employee Assistance  
Programs



# *Clearing the Fog: Make the Connection*

What are the difficulties in working from a culturally competent framework?

What prevents counselors from making the connection with clients racially and/or culturally different from themselves?

# What's in your Bag?

Color blindness?

Lack of cultural experiences?

Implicit or Explicit Biases,  
Prejudices, Stereotypes (Yes...  
Everyone Has These)

Political "Correctness" /Pseudo-  
Competence

A full moon is visible in the upper left quadrant of the image, set against a dark, starry night sky. Below the moon, a body of water reflects its light, creating a shimmering path of light that extends towards the bottom of the frame. The overall scene is serene and contemplative.

## *Point to Ponder*

- It was so much easier to blame it on Them. It was bleakly depressing to think that They were Us. If it was Them, then nothing was anyone's fault. If it was us, what did that make Me? After all, I'm one of Us. I must be. I've certainly never thought of myself as one of Them. No one ever thinks of themselves as one of Them. We're always one of Us. It's Them that do the bad things.



# *Worldview*

- ◆ The way you look at the world?
- ◆ The lens that you interpret all your experiences and how you make all your decisions?



## *Important that Counselors*

- ◆ Be aware of their  
Worldview
- ◆ Recognize Short-  
comings
  - ◆ Implicit and Explicit  
Bias
  - ◆ Take responsibility  
for misinformation  
and lack of  
knowledge
- ◆ Pursue personal  
development





# *On My Journey*

- ◆ AM I WHO I SAY I AM
  - ◆ Reality
  - ◆ Ideal Self
- ◆ Intentions and Motives
  - ◆ Anger and Frustration
- ◆ What's in the Mirror
  - ◆ Anxiety and Fear
  - ◆ Regret and Guilt



## *Emotional Resistance*

- Avoidance of feelings and unconscious emotions that are underneath the surface.
- Barriers to multicultural understanding

# *Embrace Emotional Resistance*

- Face the true nature of self
  - Self-Compassion
  - Allow for Awareness
  - Acknowledge Feelings
  - Explore them and seek to understand



*The Unpleasantness of some emotions and their potentially disturbing meanings makes for avoidance of honest multicultural dialogues and hence a blockage of the learning process.*

*-Sue, Sue, Neville, & Smith, 2022*





# *Culturally Competent Healers*

- 1) Committed to the lifelong process of self-discovery and life-span learning
- 2) Self-awareness of their personal struggles, beliefs, values, strengths, concerns, biases, assumptions of others, and limitations.



## *Culturally Competent Healers II*

- 3) Seek to understand the history and worldview of the client
  - Seek to develop the lens of the client
- 4) Engage in therapeutic techniques that are culturally appropriate and sensitive

# *Pursuing Competency*

- 1) Choice
  - Lifestyle you pursue
- 2) Engage & Maintain Relationships
- 3) Curiosity
- 4) Passion
- 5) Commitment



A close-up photograph of a person's hands playing a large, round drum. The drum's head is decorated with intricate, colorful patterns in shades of red, blue, green, and yellow. The person is wearing a light blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be an outdoor setting.

# *Cultural Humility* *"Way of Being"*

- 1) Open
- 2) Inquisitive towards clients and self
- 3) Willing to Learn



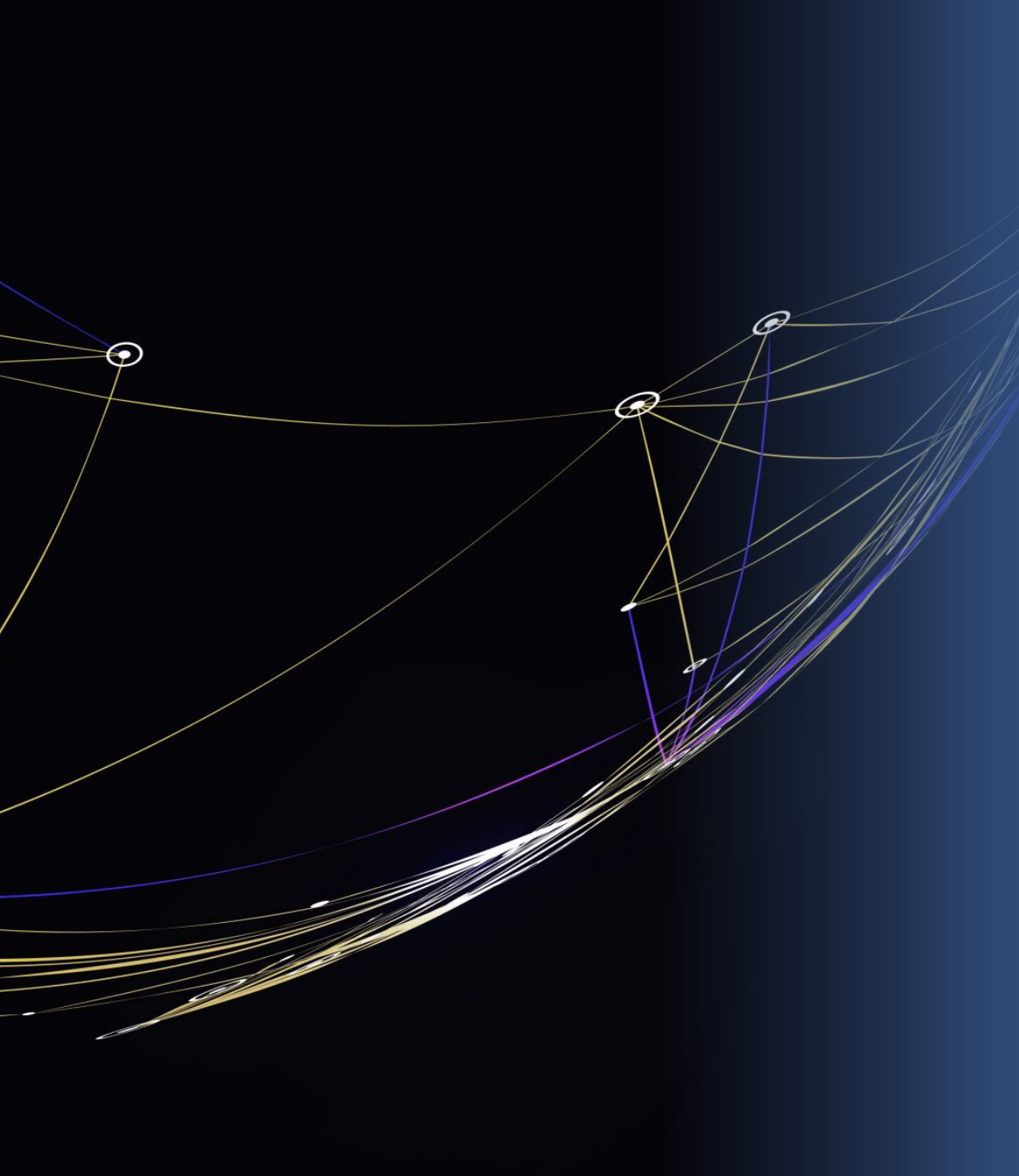


# *Benefits of Cultural Humility*

- ◆ 1) Helps build rapport with clients
- ◆ 2) Better treatment outcomes
- ◆ Client's report they benefit more from this



*It's Your  
Choice to  
Grow  
and  
Develop*

An abstract graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a network of thin, curved lines in shades of yellow, blue, and purple. Several nodes are marked with small white circles, some containing a black dot. The lines radiate from these nodes, creating a sense of interconnectedness and movement. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

*Cultural  
Competence  
helps prepare  
counselors to  
work with  
diverse clients  
however, every  
client is a  
unique  
individual.*

*Factors to  
Consider  
Working with  
Diverse  
Population*



*People of Color  
on Issues  
Pertaining to  
Race*



*Labels and  
Cognitive  
Distortions*

Ignored, Dismissed,  
Negated

```
graph TD; A[Ignored, Dismissed, Negated] --> B[Crazy]; B --> C[Misreading things]; C --> D[Overly Sensitive]; D --> E[Paranoid];
```

Crazy

Misreading things

Overly Sensitive

Paranoid



# *Communication I*

- ◆ Resistance
  - ◆ Don't be quick to label (guarded, mistrustful, denial)
  - ◆ May experience reluctance to disclose
- ◆ Don't take it personal



# *Communication II*

- ◆ Communication Style
- ◆ Paralanguage
  - ◆ Vocal Cues-Rate of speech, volume, silence,
- ◆ Proxemics-Personal Space
- ◆ Kinesics-Bodily Movements: facial expressions, posture, eye contact, gestures.



# *Time Dimension*

- ◆ Sequential Time-  
Logical order,  
punctuality, planning,  
achievement of  
future.
- ◆ Synchronous-Past,  
present, and future is  
interwoven.



# *Time Dimension II*

## Present Time Orientation

- African American
- American Indian
  - Flowing, Circular, and Harmonious

## Past- Present Focus

- Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans

# *Relational Dimension*

- ◆ Individualism (Nuclear Family)
  - ◆ Independence and Autonomy
    - ◆ Caucasians
- ◆ Collectivist (Extended)
  - ◆ Identification is linked to the family, ancestors, and past.
    - ◆ Japan, China, India



# *Relational Dimension II*

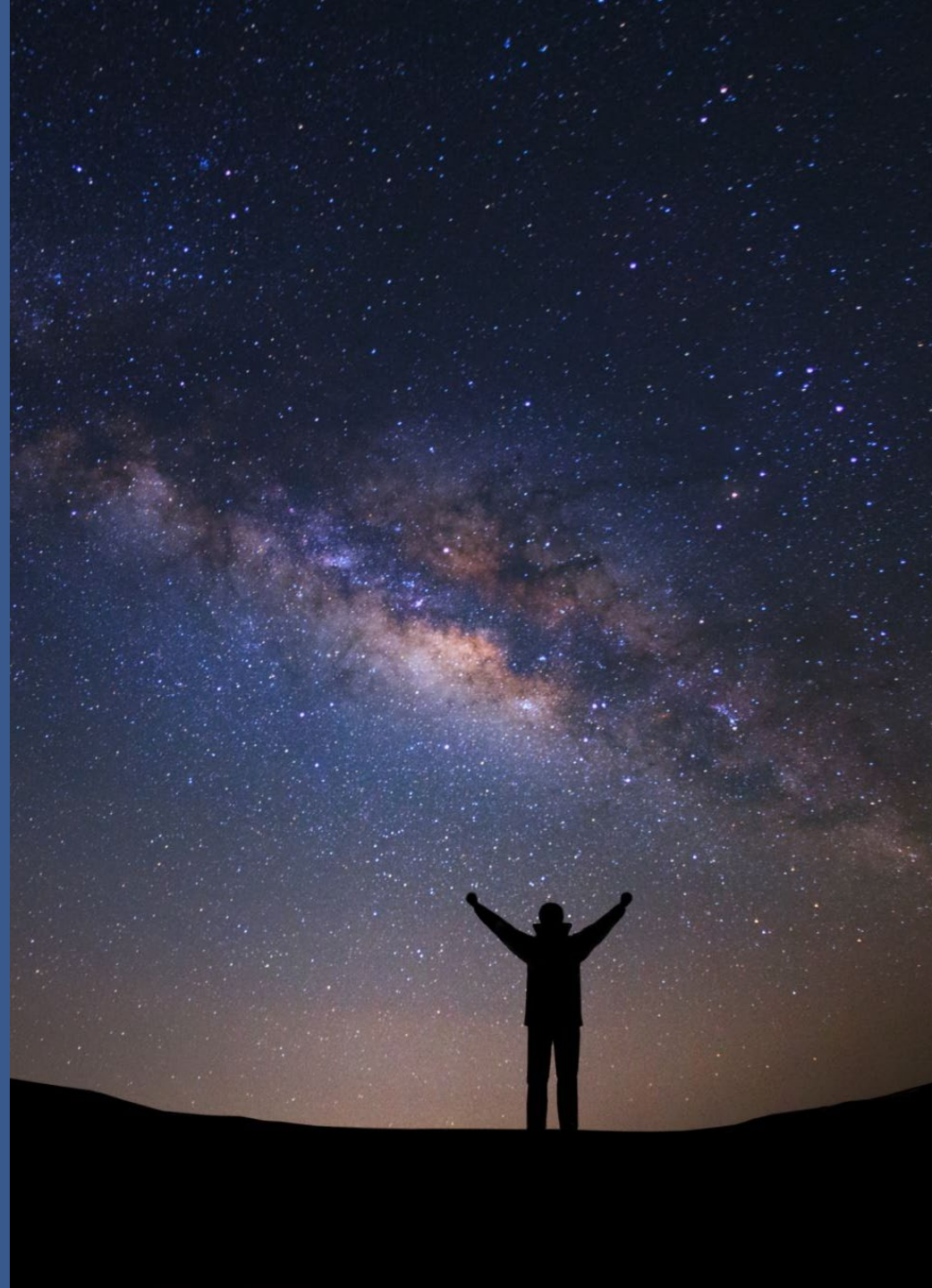
- ◆ Relational (Family and Friends)
  - ◆ Relationships extend beyond the nuclear family
  - ◆ African-American, American Indian, and Latinx



---

## *Activity Dimension*

- ◆ Master and Control
  - ◆ Always take action
- ◆ Harmonious
  - ◆ Self-contained, steadiness, and harmony with the universe
  - ◆ Eternal (Inner soul and spirit) is more important than the body (temporary)



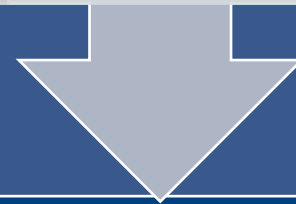
## *Cultural Identity*

Identity develops out of  
interaction with society

Experiences

Messages

Interaction



Racial, ethnic, gender,  
religious, sexual orientation  
identification, or combination.

*Cultural  
Identity:  
Racial and  
Ethnic  
Socialization*

- ◆ Parents transmit messages to their children
  - ◆ Role of race
  - ◆ Racial dynamics
  - ◆ Expectations of discrimination and racism
  - ◆ Intergroup
  - ◆ Racial and Ethnic Pride

# *Cultural Identity Development*

- ◆ The *Len's* of a person's worldview
- ◆ Identity for people of color
  - ◆ 1) Personal Identity
  - ◆ 2) Racial/Ethnic Group Identity





# *Cultural Identity Development II*

- ◆ CID theories are grounded in societal power difference
  - ◆ Between Minority and Majority
- ◆ Describe relationships
- ◆ Development of Cultural Identity
  - ◆ How they are seen



# *Cultural Identity Development III*

- ◆ Ethic Minority status increases as the person's physical status deviates from White America.



# *Double Consciousness*

- ◆ W.E.B Dubois
  - ◆ African Americans conflict between social ideals of the United States and the experience of exclusion and racism
  - ◆ Results in overlapping forms of identification

# *Cultural Identity Development Models*

- ◆ Members of minority groups move through various stages of development in valuing their cultural identity.



# *Cultural Identity Development Models II*

- ◆ Conformity
  - ◆ Choose values, lifestyle and role models from dominant group
- ◆ Dissonance
  - ◆ Question the history and information of mainstream



# *Cultural Identity Development Models III*

- ◆ Resistance Immersion-
  - ◆ Individuals immerse themselves in minority history, hold views, and reject the dominant culture
- ◆ Introspection
  - ◆ Individuals establish their racial-ethnic identity
  - ◆ Integrate how certain values fit with their personal identity



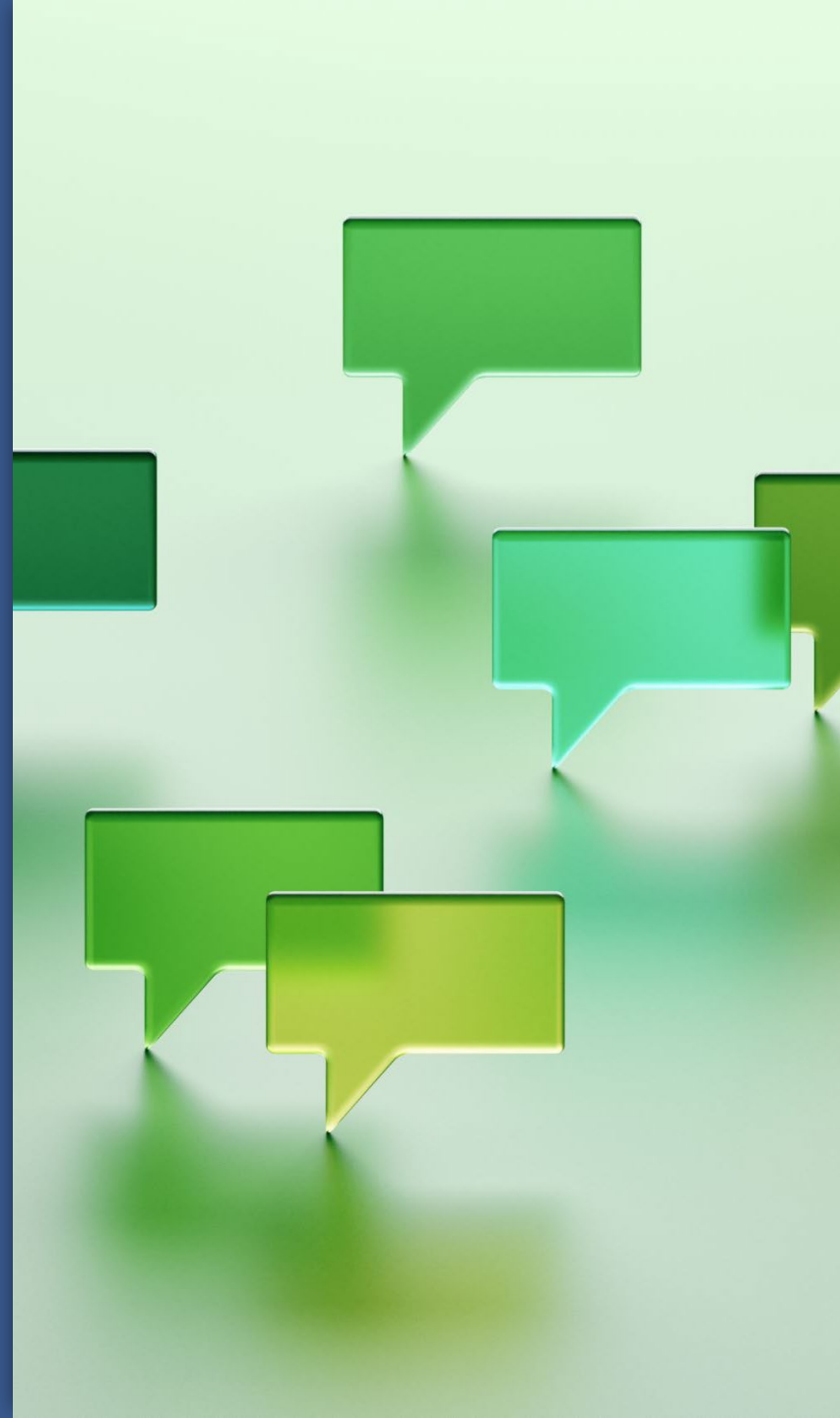
The background of the slide is a dense field of colorful wooden blocks, similar to those used in Montessori education. The blocks are in various colors including white, light blue, dark blue, orange, and red. They are scattered and some are standing upright while others are lying flat, creating a textured, three-dimensional effect.

# *Cultural Identity Development Models IV*

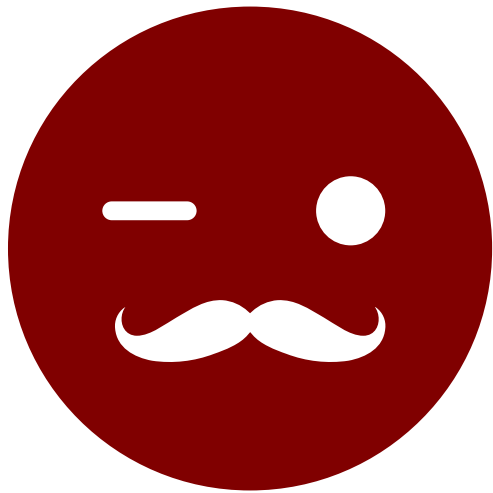
- ◆ Synergism
  - ◆ Sense of self and fulfillment
  - ◆ Appreciation of personal and other people's history
- ◆ Developing Cultural Identity
  - ◆ Is an active, dynamic, lifelong process

# *Microaggressions*

- ◆ Verbal and Nonverbal messages that are hostile or offensive
  - ◆ Intentional and Unintentional
  - ◆ Traditionally aimed at marginalized groups







## *Microaggressions II*

- ◆ Microassault-Racial derogation through verbal and nonverbal with intentions to hurt and get a point across.
- ◆ Microinsult-Insensitive communication geared to demean a person's cultural heritage and identity.

## *Microaggressions III*

- ◆ Microinvalidation-Communication that excludes, negates, or nullifies, a person's color thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality.





## *Microaggressions IV*

- ◆ Society says that people are hypersensitive
  - ◆ Affects people's physical and mental health and self-worth.

A photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge at night, with the bridge's towers and suspension cables visible against a dark blue sky and water. The bridge is illuminated, and the water reflects the lights.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aM3QacqQ0GI&t=4>


# Brief Considerations by Race

- African American
- Religious Influences- Church = Community
- Family Roles- Extended family
- Communication Patterns- Assertive, Affect, High Context
- Gender Roles- Egalitarian
- Cultural Norms- Cultural “healthy” paranoia, “people-hood”
- Historical Context- Slavery, racism
- Mental Health Concerns- 50% drop out after one session

# Brief Considerations by Race

## ◇ Native American

- ◇ Religious Influences- Shaman and traditional healers
- ◇ Family Roles- Respect for elders
- ◇ Communication Patterns- Oral tradition, non-linear
- ◇ Gender Roles- 27% female head of household
- ◇ Cultural Norms- collective orientation, harmonic values
- ◇ Historical Context- boarding schools, treaty negotiations, 512 tribes
- ◇ Mental Health Concerns- higher suicide rates, high drop out rate



# Brief Considerations by Racial Group

- Asian American/ Pacific Islander
  - Religious Influences- Buddhist, Confucian, Christian
  - Family Roles- Extended family, filial piety
  - Communication Patterns- limited eye contact, use of silence
  - Gender Roles- patriarchal, submissive females, authoritarian parenting
  - Cultural Norms- collective orientation, shame, model minority
  - Historical Context- internment camps, Vietnam War, boat people
  - Mental Health Concerns- advice seeking, controlled emotions

# Brief Considerations by Racial Group

- Latino and Hispanic
- Religious Influences- Catholicism
- Family Roles- Extended family, group identity
- Communication Patterns- high context, ESL
- Gender Roles- Patriarchal, Machismo, Marianismo
- Cultural Norms- Fastest growing population in US
- Historical Context- Latino/a vs. Chicano/a vs. Hispanic
- Mental Health Concerns- role of fate,  $\frac{3}{4}$  speak Spanish in home





# Brief Considerations by Race

## White/Euro- Americans

- Religious Influences- Christian influences
- Family Roles- Nuclear family
- Communication Patterns- low context, verbal, direct, written
- Gender Roles- patriarchal, female is homemaker
- Cultural Norms- individualistic, action oriented, protestant work ethic
- Historical Context- European immigrants
- Mental Health Concerns- verbal, self-disclosure valued



# Effective Intervention Strategies

1. Learning about the Indigenous Community
2. Fictive Kin
3. Pastoral Care and Spirituality
4. Advice
5. Street Credibility
6. Culturally Appropriate “Homework” Suggestions



# More Considerations

- ✓ Impact of Socio-economic Status
- ✓ Family Constellation
- ✓ Circle of Support



# Trauma

- ➔ Rape or Molestation
- ➔ Domestic Violence
- ➔ Removal out of the home
- ➔ Substance Abuse and related behaviors
  - Impact of family
- ➔ Incarceration (Away from parents)
- ➔ Natural Disasters
- ➔ Witnessing Violence
- ➔ Grief and Loss



# Historical Trauma

- ➔ Multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural, racial, or ethnic group. It is related to major events that oppressed a particular group of people.
- ➔ Slavery, Colonization of American Indians, Holocaust



# Generational Trauma (Intergenerational Trauma)

- ➔ Passing down of traumatic experiences or stressors from one generation to another.
  - Often direct personal experiences witnessing violence.
  - Living in environments where the threats of violence are constant.

# African-Americans

- Factors to Consider:
  - Mistrustful of Institutions
  - Encountering Stereotypes
  - Matriarchal
  - The Role of Extended Family Members
    - Flexible
  - Fictive Kin
  - Strong Religious Orientation
    - Resourceful and Resilient
  - Finances and Resources

# Factors to Consider

- Exposure to Racism
- Differential Responses according to the race of individual
  - Blacks: Open, Responsive, Playful and Expression
  - White Americans: Defensive, Guarded, Formal and Less Verbal (Build Rapport)



# Intervention Strategies

- Understand the role of the family members
  - Grandfathers or Uncles may serve as the father figure
- Power of the Extended Family
- Consulting with Spiritual Leaders
- Language Barriers
- Community Credibility
- Deal with Suspicion and Mistrust & Strong Feelings of Anger and Frustration

# Intervention Strategies with African-American Clients

- Identify Past Role Models
  - Identify Common Strengths
- Activities involving Spirituality
  - Prayer
  - Bible Verses and Ascribe Meaning
- Music Therapy
  - Meaning of Dance (Krump Dancing)
  - Rap
- Interventions Inclusive of Family Members
  - Keep Family Intact

# Additional Interventions

- Art Therapy
  - Dancing and Drumming
- Poetry
- Story Telling
  - Identify Heroes
  - Ways of Overcoming
- Historical Movies and CDs



# Asian Populations

- ◆ Head of Household generally oldest male
- ◆ Decision making is not centered around their needs exclusively. What is best for them is best for the family.
- ◆ Highly unlikely family members approve for individuals to go outside the extended family and community to seek assistance of any type.


# Considerations for Asian Populations

- ❖ Consider intergenerational conflicts
  - ❖ Changes in Role
  - ❖ Culture Conflict
  - ❖ Differences in Acculturation Level
- ❖ Therapy or interventions time limited
  - ❖ Focus on concrete resolution of problems
  - ❖ Deal with present or immediate future
- ❖ Role Preparation
- ❖ Inappropriate to ask the children pertaining to problems in the family






# Interventions for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

- Consult the Elder in the family
    - ⊙ Parent
  - Use restraint when gathering information
    - ⊙ Sharing private matters may take time
  - Focus on specific problems brought in by the client
  - Take active and directive role
- 



# Asian Populations

- Asian clients generally value collectivism and family interdependence are fundamental aspects of life and worldview.
    - ⊙ Authoritarian
  - Acculturation affects where he or she lies on the continuum of interdependence
  - Counseling not widely accepted
    - ⊙ The preferred method of solving problems is to defer to authority figure in the family.
- 

# Latinx Population

- ◆ Danger to over-generalize Latinx client to the whole population
- ◆ Latinx as a group struggle with:
  - ◆ Pregnancy and Birth
  - ◆ Poverty
  - ◆ Single Parent Families
  - ◆ Other problems: Negative Cultural Identities and poor self-concepts
  - ◆ Distrust and hostility w/ Anglo-American professionals



# Latinx Population

- ◆ Conflict between home language and school language
- ◆ Reconcile loyalties between Hispanic and Anglo-American Expectations
- ◆ Conditions resulting from adverse effects of racism, stereotypes and discrimination

# *Latino Population Interventions*

- ⊕ Assess Level of Acculturation
- ⊕ Respect the Authoritarian Parental Position
  - ⊕ Interview the parents first and siblings second
- ⊕ Recognize the importance of immediate and extended family
- ⊕ Interventions should be inclusive of family members
- ⊕ Spirituality and Religious Practices

# **Latino Population Interventions**

- **Read folk tales to the children**
  - **Discuss cultural values**
  - **Discuss specific ways that characters encountered and solved problems**
- **Specific Holidays and Ceremonies**
  - **Rituals**
- **Assess possible problems from external sources such as need for food, shelter, employment or stressful interactions with agencies**

# Latino Populations Interventions

- Art and Dance
  - Painting or Poetry
- Influence of metaphysical and supernatural forces
- Understand the role of family members

# American Indian

- ◇ Over the years the American Indian has been silenced, they need a safe supportive environment allow emotional growth
- ◇ Treatment Philosophy
  - Empowerment
  - Spirituality
  - Internal Strength
  - Healthy Emotional Expression



# Effective Interventions for Trauma

- ◇ American Indians
- ◇ Impact of Trauma
- ◇ Psychological Effects-  
Complete loss of power  
comes despair
- ◇ Power of the oppressor  
(caricature of the power  
taken from the Native  
American people)
  - Internalized vs. Externalized



# American Indian

- ◇ Humor as part of the Healing Process
- ◇ Story Telling
  - Elders or Family Members
- ◇ Special Ceremonies
  - Powwow, Feasts and Intertribal Dancing
- ◇ Art Therapy
  - Warrior, Teacher, Healer and Visionary



# American Indian

- ◇ Connection with Creator and support from peers
- ◇ Learning or re-experiencing about traditional American Indian Ways
  - Role Models
  - Social Roles
- ◇ Sweat Lodges and Talking Circles
  - Supportive and Safe Environment
  - Freely Express Emotions their pain or loss







# Cultural Challenges

- ⇒ Many Cultural Subgroups with differing dialects and language
  - More than 50 Hispanic/Latino groups
  - 60 distinct Asian and Pacific Islanders groups
  - More than 500 American Indian Tribes and sub-clans
  - Many mixed race people of color with different levels of acculturation to the White Culture

# Ethical Obligations

- Counselors and helping professionals should be bound and guided by ethical obligations to “respect the dignity and promote the welfare of clients” and practice competently

# Ethical Considerations

- Standards Based Ethical Practice vs. Welfare of the Client
- Individualism (Western Philosophy) vs. Collectivism (Eastern Philosophy)
- Dual Relationships
  - Engaging in social activities with clients
  - Vehicle to promoting client welfare

# Ethical Perspectives

- Utilitarianism-focuses on the greatest good for the greatest number of people
  - “Ends based thinking or consequentialism”
  - Looking at projected outcomes as a means for determining ethical behavior


# Ethical Relativism

---

- Ethical Relativism-Each reference group is allowed it's own criteria for ethical behavior
  - Moral standards are grounded only in social customs
  - Don't pass judgment on other cultures when we don't understand them
  - Each culture is right unto itself
  - Multicultural vs. Monocultural



# Absolutist

- Absolutist- Applies the same rules across cultures
    - Rule Based
    - One's behaviors becomes a universal standard that others needs to follow
    - Ex. Western society becomes the criteria by which all behavior is evaluated
- 

# Universalism

- ◆ Universalism-Honors diversity, but lifts up universal moral principles that are common to most cultures:
  - ◆ Caring
  - ◆ Reciprocal Empathy
  - ◆ Cognizant of one's own cultural background and the impact of another based on power and privilege
  - ◆ Affirm cultural differences while emphasizing commonalities that link cultures

# Multicultural Ethical Decision-Making Model

- Ethical Decision Making Steps:
  - 1) Identify and Define the Ethical Dilemma
  - 2) Explore the Context of Power
  - 3) Assess Acculturation and Racial Identity Development
  - 4) Seek Consultation
  - 5) Generate Alternative Solutions
  - 6) Select a Course of Action
  - 7) Evaluate the Decision



# Navigating (Directing?) the Process


- » Should you be more or less directive?
- » You have to do this for you...
- » Self-disclosure and Advice
- » Privacy Issues
- » When to Refer





# The Last Word

- An individual who is unaware of his or her own cultural values is like a cup with a hole. Without knowledge of the hole, the liquid inside leaks out onto the owner, the floor, and anything else it touches (Sue & Sue, 1990)

The background features a large, glowing sphere on the left side, transitioning from bright yellow at the top to deep red at the bottom. The right side of the image is a solid, dark blue gradient. The text "QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?" is centered in the upper portion of the image.

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?