

Experience 1—Lips Drag Show

Where you went

I went to Lips, which is self-described on their website as “the ultimate in drag dining in Fort Lauderdale (www.fladragshow.com).”

Why you chose that place/event/etc.

I wanted to make sure I experienced a setting that was welcoming to all individuals, especially people who may identify differently from myself in terms of sexuality. I took the sexuality IAT this week and was surprised to see my bias as it pertained to gay people. I wanted to make sure I was in an environment that was overwhelmingly inviting to all orientations.

What your overall reactions were going to this place/participating in this event/etc.

Going into the show/brunch, I found myself quite nervous, as it was my first time going and unlike anything I’ve ever experienced before. Upon entry, however, my nervousness suddenly disappeared. I felt very comfortable in the environment- it was truly welcoming to everyone and I was quite at ease from the beginning. I found the show/event to be more than pleasant, had a fun time, and was able to interact with the performers and laugh at myself.

How this will influence/impact your work as a counselor or human services provider

I think that through new experiences, especially those where I am interacting with people so dissimilar to myself, I am able to grow as a person. This experience is not something that I ever thought I would have had and I really did not know what to expect, as evidenced by my nerves upon entry. I think that education and experience is of utmost importance to grow as a counselor and be effective in helping clients. There was literally not a single person at the show, no matter their sexual preference, who was out to have anything but fun, smile, and laugh. The interactions

I had with other guests were joyful and warm, they were as open to me as I attempted to be with them. Overall this was a great experience that will hopefully help me understand that there is an implicit bias within myself, as much as I don't want there to be, which needs to be understood and explored through exposure and further interaction.

Experience 2—Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Where you went

I went to a service of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (a Mormon Church).

Why you chose that place/event/etc.

I chose to attend this church to see the differences in religious practices of those that are culturally different, but strikingly similar in population (white, upper-class, educated.)

What your overall reactions were going to this place/participating in this event/etc.

Just as with my first experience, I was incredibly nervous, assuming I wouldn't fit in. This is interesting to me because as opposed to the other places, I looked "the part". Most of the individuals were white and were within my geographical area. The church, however, is very different than things that I have seen where I live. The women were not allowed to be a part of the clergy, but simply members in the pews who, with the exception of the piano player, seemed to take care of children. The children were a different element of church here than I was used to as well- they were allowed to be as loud as they needed, and were welcomed as part of the congregation, which was clearly happy to both hear and see them grow.

How this will influence/impact your work as a counselor or human services provider

I think this will help me as a provider as it again reinforces the idea that exterior appearances have nothing to do with the thoughts and cultures of individuals. The church members were very welcoming and accepting of me as an outsider, which they knew since I did not partake in their religious practice of sacrament. I continue to see that each and every person is unique and should be treated as such, and that many times the difference in culture cannot be visually identified.

Journal Entry 3—Article Reflection

What was your initial reaction to the article?

I think that the article brings to light a very interesting concept which I had not thought about before. Not only has there been prejudice in the system where African American people have been hurt by thoughts and philosophies of the past, but the distrust is much deeper and the laws of the country, not simply the thoughts of individuals, reflect these profound injustices and oppression. The laws of Chicago as discussed in the article were adopted to allow white people to maintain control financially over African American people. As recent as the Wells Fargo example where the bank was held financially liable for marketing subprime loans to African American people, this has not changed. The general distrust of African Americans towards white people is extremely high and obviously for extremely good reasons that are reflect not only in ideas, but also institutionally and systemically (Coates, 2014).

How might you apply the contents to your work with future clients?

I think the article depicts something that many have not thought about, which is that the fact we all have an implicit bias because of the society we grew up in and runs deeper than many of us ever realize. But to understand the distrust and the rationale behind that distrust from African Americans, which is thoroughly rooted in history is something can be extremely helpful for everyone to understand. I think that both African American people and white people may not know the extent to which this distrust is founded, in the event it can be adequately explained to an individual being counseled, this will help. For an individual to have a more in-depth knowledge of why and how the mistrust began and continues is important to disseminate to clients I'm working with, whenever appropriate.

Why do you think this article was assigned in a course on multicultural counseling?

I think this was assigned to show that the divide between African Americans and those who were/are the oppressors runs deep. It is not simply a generational issue, this has been and still is an issue that continues to be pervasive throughout daily life. Until laws are drastically changed, which will lead to all having a fair shot, the distrust and pain experience by the African American community will continue.

How might the author's ideas, information, opinions, etc. be useful for counseling individuals from marginalized groups (the poor, the discriminated, etc.)?

I think that everyone should understand the distrust that has been conveyed is deeply rooted in reality and present throughout every aspect of society and daily life. There is an implicit bias for most people, the more people that understand where, when, why, and how this bias began, the better equipped we are to deal with it.

What particular passage from the article resonated with you and why?

“When we think of white supremacy, we picture Colored Only signs, but we should picture pirate flags.” I think this aptly sums up the article and my own understanding both before and after reading it. I find that the illegal activities that African Americans have been subjected to over the years is incredulous and abhorrent. The fact that communities were built on the backs of African Americans making white people richer and richer is a crime, but not only a monetary one. What was stolen was the pride and the due respect that is and was owed to African Americans then and now.

Reference:

Coates, T.-N. (2014, June). *The case for reparations*. The Atlantic. Retrieved February 19, 2022, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/projects/reparations/>

Information 4—Senior Pastor

Who you talked with

Nate Davis, Senior Pastor Now Church

Why you chose that individual

Pastor Nate is a senior pastor at a predominantly African American church in Durham, NC. He grew up in Chapel Hill/Carrboro and has now been lead pastor at Now Church, which he started with his wife.

What you learned from that person that you didn't know, including group membership contexts

I talked to pastor Nate at length about the congregation of his church, which is about 500 people wherein approximately five of them are white. I found it very interesting that his main issue that most white people don't understand has mostly to do with socioeconomic status and not race itself. He said that most white people don't understand that people simply don't have means for many of the basic needs in life. The example he used was transportation, many people tend to take this for granted. I also thought it was interesting that he would not marry homosexual couples because he didn't feel he could appropriately counsel them in the journey and so he felt the need to refer them to someone that could.

I also spoke to pastor Nate about where he grew up- I grew up down the road from him, but in a predominantly white area, whereas he was in a predominately African American area. The area where he grew up in is no longer predominately African American, he stated it is "all white people now." As the properties were passed down from one generation to another, the taxes grew

to a point where payments could no longer be met and the owners were forced to sell. This, to me, is a profound example of financial oppression. While the original owners were somehow grandfathered into a tax system that was workable to them, when they passed away, higher taxes were levied and African Americans had no choice but to sell. This most likely brought in lower offers and white buyers, who now rent the homes to affluent college students.

How this will influence/impact your work as a counselor or human services provider

I think that understanding both race and class are important to understand as a counselor. Especially the fact that many tend to lump these two aspects of identity into one bucket. I also think that the uniqueness of each and every person continues to amaze me (as does my lack of understanding- these exercises were extremely humbling for me.) While pastor Nate is an African American, the fact he will not marry homosexual couples was at first surprising, but then contributed to my understanding that we all have implicit bias, even pastors, those of other races, in different classes, was an interesting fact and one that helped me to grow as a person and a future counselor.

Information 5—Rabbi

Who you talked with

Rabbi Roy A. Birnbaum

Why you chose that individual

Rabbi Roy is a former green beret who, now retired, has decided to commit his life to those in need. He has done extensive work with the Navajo nation where he has worked with their members in recovery for substance use. He also has traveled across the country to ensure that former troops have a proper burial in the case they have no others to attend or oversee their funeral. While Roy is a Rabbi, he understands and accepts all other forms of religion and religious beliefs.

What you learned from that person that you didn't know, including group membership contexts

I found it interesting and very noble of Rabbi Roy that will oversee funeral activities and pray with anyone who has any god, or higher power, as he sees it. It is not necessarily a religious practice for him to help others, but instead a spiritual one that Roy hopes to instill in others through love and service.

How this will influence/impact your work as a counselor or human services provider

I thought it was very interesting the openness that Roy had about all other religions. While he has his own beliefs and feelings toward his god, he understands other human beings as unique individuals with their own beliefs and spiritual practices. I also thought it was interesting all of the work he did for the Navajo Nation. Roy is not an American Indian, but has chosen to work with them in a religious and healing capacity. The openness, compassion, and all that Rabbi

Birnbaum stands for is truly something that I will want to emulate and strive for myself as a counselor.