

# How We Develop Cultural Proficiency in Telephone Support

Attending to the many colorful threads of life



# Introduction

The observable and measurable characteristics of the face of America are rapidly changing:

- Complexion is taking on hues of brown and olive
- wrinkles are showing
- utterances are increasingly enriched with multicultural linguistics

Traditional ways of social order and delivery of health and human services are undergoing adaptation.



Multicultural citizens and immigrants  
are seeking the quality of life  
Americans have taken for granted.

Reciprocity

While they try to learn our ways, we  
must enable them in this transition.



# The Term

The transcultural term is . . .

**Cultural Awareness**

More meaningful term is . . .

**Cultural Sensitivity**

Operational term has been . . .

**Cultural Competence**

Leading edge term . . .

**Cultural Proficiency**



# Definitions

## Culture:

- 1) Integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations;
- 2) Customary belief, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.

Merriam-Webster



# Definitions

Cultural competence:

Having adequate or requisite ability or qualities to function toward an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and (consequential) transmission of knowledge to succeeding generations, expressed through customary belief, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.



# Definitions

## Cultural Sensitivity:

Deals with our understanding of OUR OWN cultural biases, constructs and values. We must possess the ability to look at our own perceptions and recognize their limited vantage point.



It is culture that determines the expression of illness or dis-ease.





# Antecedent

Cultural diversity

Recognition of the various cultures,  
races and ethnicities of our nation.

Have been based on 8 themes  
influential to nursing practice . . .



# Nursing Practice Themes

- Immigrant status
- Non-compliant behavior
- Susceptibility to disease
- Population differences in health status
- Demographic changes
- Urban and rural contexts
- Workforce
- Complex research issues



# Past Emphasis in Delivery of Care

Has been on the differences between cultures with inherent message of the limitations, barriers or difficulties to overcome in effecting behavior change

Conform to Western ways.



# Perception

- How we view others determines how we respond to their needs
- We are ethnocentric by nature & culture
- The tree in the forest (example)
- One must be immersed to build awareness



# The struggle

To become immersed without imposing one's own culture on the other.

Americans are self-reliant, at the center of things, efficient, and time-bound.

To examine one's place in this diverse culture and to understand how other ethnic people are enmeshed in their culture is difficult.



# The Struggle to Understand

We tend to think that others will want to change/conform to the perceived norm of American way of life.

America is no longer a “melting pot”

It is a “salad”




# Misunderstandings

## “Color-blindness”

Pretend that color differences do not exist  
(70s)

Treat everyone the same—eliminates  
discrimination

 Civilized Europeans superior to  
“barbarians” of the non-white cultures  
(Bork)



# Reality

Who counts to you as human?

Everyone!

Everyone deserves the highest quality of care at every given moment.





# The Tools We Use

- Accept individuals as different and refer to them that way
- Seek what is common among cultures
- Communication patterns (verbal & non-verbal)
- Learning the other's language



# Measurement

## Continuum of cultural development

Ethnocentric:

Deny existence of  
other cultures

Ethnorelative:

Total integration  
of knowledge,  
practice, & attitude



Cultural destructiveness >

Proficiency




# Cultural Development Model

Marcia Wells, JCHN(2000) Vol. 17, #4

## Cognitive Phase


### Cultural Incompetence

-  Lack of knowledge of the cultural implications of health behavior

### Cultural Knowledge

-  Learning the elements of culture and their role in shaping and defining health behavior

### Cultural Awareness

-  Recognizing and understanding the cultural implications of health behavior—  
understanding the issues and problems




# Cultural Development Model

Marcia Wells, JCHN(2000) Vol. 17, #4

## Affective Phase


### Cultural Sensitivity

-  Integration of cultural knowledge & awareness into individual and institutional behavior

### Cultural Competence

-  Routine application of culturally appropriate health care intervention and practices

### Cultural Proficiency

-  Integration of all above into professional practice, teaching, and research. Master of the cognitive and affective phases of cultural development



# Research into Access to Care

The darker the skin of the poor, the poorer (more substandard) the health care

Refer to:

Surgeon General's Report of 2002

Institute of Medicine Report of 2002



# How To

■ Ideas about equity, inferiority, and superiority are not figments of people's minds. . .opinions held tend to be self-fulfilled. If members of a race or group are believed to be deficient in character or capacities, the larger society will consign them to subordinate positions.

Hacker, in *Two Nations* (1992)



# How To

- First step: examine your own biases
- Then: refer to God's Word
- Then: refer to the over-arching philosophy of FrameWork Health

Not:

A smoker is a smoker, is a smoker . . .



# What Will Facilitate Building Cultural Proficiency?

- Experience people
- Confront ethnocentric discoveries about self
- Read literature

Recommended:

*Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication Across Cultures*, by Lustig and Koester (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.) (2003) Allyn & Bacon





# Application to Coaching by Phone

- Consider each participant as an integral being (wholeness)
- Seek for meaning in the verbal and non-verbal communication
- Envision (vicarious experience) their life pattern
- Seek to understand his/her perception of their life situation




# Application to Coaching by Phone

- See the expressions of the body (symptoms, feelings, etc.) as expression of culture
- Relate to the individual as agent of their self-care, not a subject of your care
- Work for congruency in the culturally diverse belief systems of you and the participant.



# Communication Phenomenon

 Even sensitive communication to another where it is assumed English is understood can be heard (received) inaccurately or heard in the context of another meaning.

The message must filter through cultural rules of sending into the cultural lens of the listener.



# Internet Resource

[www.DiversityRX.org](http://www.DiversityRX.org)



DISCUSSION

Next . . .

Thank You

