

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY & SAVIORISM

INSIYAH MERCHANT | UCSD PROJECT RISHI

WHAT IS CULTURAL SENSITIVITY?

“Being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value – positive or negative, better or worse, right or wrong.”

Adjusting to a new culture can be difficult. You might be tempted to judge or reject parts of the culture because you are not used to them or because you feel uncomfortable.

How do you prepare for a cross-cultural mission experience?

- Develop cultural agility
 - Cultural agility is the way you interact with people based on the cultural context surrounding you.
 - Don't fake knowing knowledge in their culture. Instead, be aware of your own cultural biases and manage those when you interact with those from different cultures.
 - Think about what makes your culture distinct from others. Think about your unique traditions and values and how they shape the way you think.
 - You may be offended if someone arrives 2 hours late to an event, but in many cultures arriving 2 hours late isn't a big deal.
 - Be open to learning new things from the differences you encounter in new places and around new cultures.
- Practice cultural sensitivity
 - Don't just learn to be culturally aware. You need to learn how to act appropriately in different cultural settings and how well you connect with those around you.
 - North American culture tends to be more boisterous in public than other cultures, so be aware of how loudly your group is talking or laughing when walking around, for example.

Cultural sensitivity also applies to how you directly interact with others. If someone invites you into their home to learn about their lifestyle, be mindful of their feelings and affirm their dignity.

THE ESFT MODEL FOR CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Essential questions to foster culturally-sensitive healthcare that improves patient adherence and health outcomes.

EXPLANATORY MODEL

Reveal the patient's understanding and own experience of their medical condition.



- What do you call your problem?
- What do you think is causing it?
- How does it affect your life?
- What treatment do you think will work?

SOCIAL BARRIERS

Examine social and financial barriers to adherence.



- Does your insurance cover your medications?
- Do you have access to a pharmacy?
- Is it difficult to afford your medications or copayments?

FEAR AND CONCERNS

Determine how the patient feels about taking medications.



- How do you feel about taking the medication?
- What have you heard about this medication?
- What worries do you have about side effects?
- Do you think the medication will interfere with your life?

THERAPEUTIC CONTRACTING

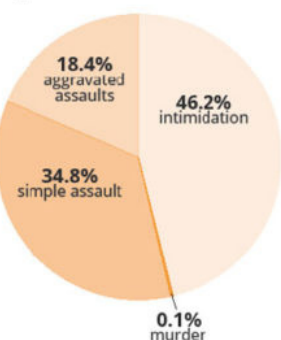
Check the patient's understanding of the treatment plan and elicit a contract.



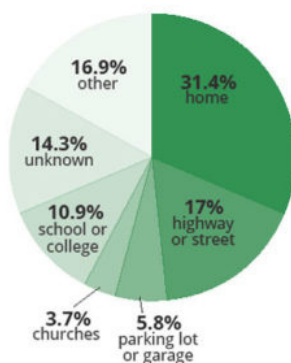
- How do you plan to take the medications?
- How do you feel about your treatment plan?
- Can you repeat the (treatment) instructions back to me in your own words?

National hate crime statistics

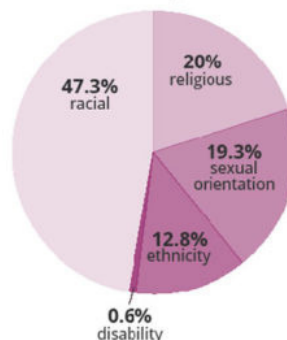
Types of hate crime offenses



Locations of hate crimes



Biases motivating hate crimes



In early 2017, the Southern Poverty Law Center recorded a whopping 1,372 bias incidents. Of that total, more than 25 percent were motivated by anti-immigrant sentiments.

When acting in a culturally sensitive way, remember to ground each interaction you have with others. Understand that their background and experiences vary from your own. This will help you to lead with understanding and empathy, rather than judgment, an incredibly important shift.

What is the Saviorism Concept?

Synonymous to “White Savior,” “saviorism is a trope in which a white character rescues people of color from their plight. The white savior is portrayed as messianic and often learns something about themselves in the process of rescuing.”

The term “White savior complex” was established when white people who considered themselves helpers to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) were really “helping” for the wrong reason, sometimes doing more harm than good.

This does not refer to all white people. Just outsiders who assume they know what is best for BIPOC and force Western culture.

ASPECTS & ASSUMPTIONS OF WHITENESS & WHITE CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

White dominant culture, or **whiteness**, refers to the ways white people and their traditions, attitudes and ways of life have been normalized over time and are now considered standard practices in the United States. And since white people still hold most of the institutional power in America, we have all internalized some aspects of white culture—including people of color.



Rugged Individualism

- The individual is the primary unit
- Self-reliance
- Independence & autonomy highly valued + rewarded
- Individuals assumed to be in control of their environment, "You get what you deserve"

Family Structure

- The nuclear family: father, mother, 2-3 children is the ideal social unit
- Husband is breadwinner and head of household
- Wife is homemaker and subordinate to the husband
- Children should have own rooms, be independent



Emphasis on Scientific Method

- Objective, rational linear thinking
- Cause and effect relationships
- Quantitative emphasis

History

- Based on Northern European immigrants' experience in the United States
- Heavy focus on the British Empire
- The primacy of Western (Greek, Roman) and Judeo-Christian tradition



Protestant Work Ethic

- Hard work is the key to success
- Work before play
- "If you didn't meet your goals, you didn't work hard enough"

Religion

- Christianity is the norm
- Anything other than Judeo-Christian tradition is foreign
- No tolerance for deviation from single god concept



Status, Power & Authority

- Wealth = worth
- Your job is who you are
- Respect authority
- Heavy value on ownership of goods, space, property

Future Orientation

- Plan for future
- Delayed gratification
- Progress is always best
- "Tomorrow will be better"



Time

- Follow rigid time schedules
- Time viewed as a commodity

Aesthetics

- Based on European culture
- Steak and potatoes; "bland is best"
- Woman's beauty based on blonde, thin—"Barbie"
- Man's attractiveness based on economic status, power, intellect

Holidays

- Based on Christian religions
- Based on white history & male leaders



Justice

- Based on English common law
- Protect property & entitlements
- Intent counts

Competition

- Be #1
- Win at all costs
- Winner/loser dichotomy
- Action Orientation
- Master and control nature
- Must always "do something" about a situation
- Aggressiveness and Extroversion
- Decision-Making
- Majority rules (when Whites have power)



Communication

- "The King's English" rules
- Written tradition
- Avoid conflict, intimacy
- Don't show emotion
- Don't discuss personal life
- Be polite

Discussion Questions

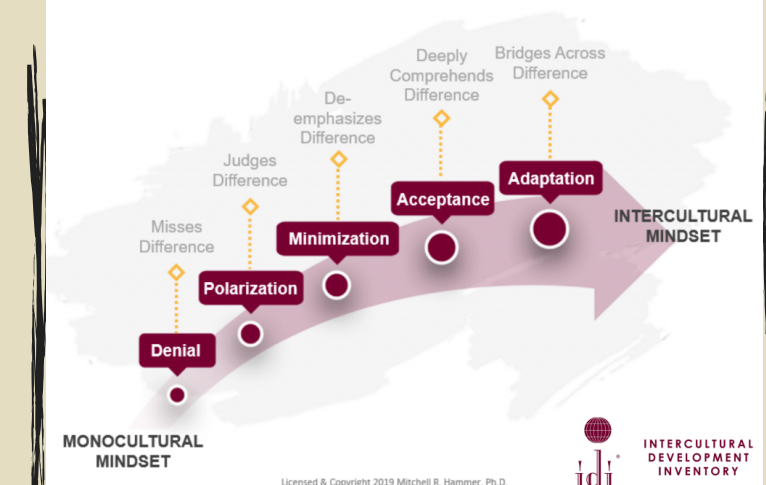
- What is an example of a training activity that can engage in self-reflection around your own identity and how it relates to the work you will do in the future in new cultural settings?
- What is needed to create authentic connections between privileged and underprivileged communities?
- How would you engage with (and try resolving) someone who has a lack of understanding of how their identity and privilege affects their work in new cultural settings?

The negative effects of the White Savior/Saviorism concept

Most often, work done in third world countries, especially after disasters, generally offer little by the way of work qualifications. For example, missions send out young folk to provide short-term support by providing healthcare services and set up clinics without having any medical experience. They even build schools or homes in the villages and communities even though there are unemployed workers in the community who have construction experience. The help the missionaries provide often creates more problems than solutions because it is a quick and temporary bandage for the issues the communities are truly facing.

Missionary work and volunteering in other countries can be beneficial if you are learned about cultural sensitivity. Ask the communities you will be working in what they need and try offering exactly that. Involve the local community in the country you are in by ensuring you develop sustainable projects and relationships. And remember, your work should stem from a perspective of equality, not superiority.

Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC™)



The IDC describes a set of skill sets toward cultural differences. The ability to deeply shift cultural perspective and bridge behavior across cultural differences is achieved when you maintain an Adaptation perspective. This continuum is adapted from the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity originally proposed by Milton Bennett.

To learn more about this model:
<https://bit.ly/IDCSkills>

A Real Life Example - Cultural Diversity in Healthcare

Canh Cao, a thirty-four-year-old Vietnamese woman, was treated by a medical student at a public health clinic. She made several visits for various physical complaints such as abdominal pain, backache, headaches. She was diagnosed with somatoform pain disorder—preoccupation with pain in absence of physical findings. Several months later, Cao attempted suicide. She was sent for evaluation to a psychiatrist, who at that point diagnosed her with depression. She had been depressed all along, but the medical student was both inexperienced and unaware of cultural issues, so he missed it.

To read some more case studies from the real world, check out: bit.ly/CaseStudiesField