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PSJS 250: Social Change
through Service

**Cultural Competence
and
Cultural
Communication
in Service-Learning**

Adapted from a presentation by
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What is Cultural Competence?

- “Culture” includes language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups.
- Culturally “competent” professionals in service-learning means recognizing that staff and clients have different needs based on many factors and providing tailored service to fit those needs.



Cultural competence is comprised of four components:

- A. Awareness of one's own cultural worldview
- B. Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews
- C. Attitude towards cultural differences
- D. Cross-cultural skills

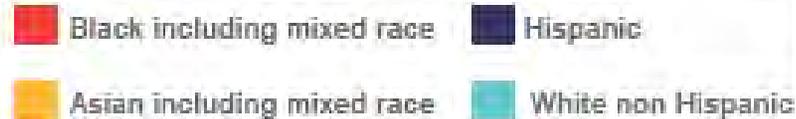
Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.

Why should we discuss cultural competence?

- Changes in Racial Demographics

US POPULATION PROJECTIONS TO 2050

Percentage by race and Hispanic origin



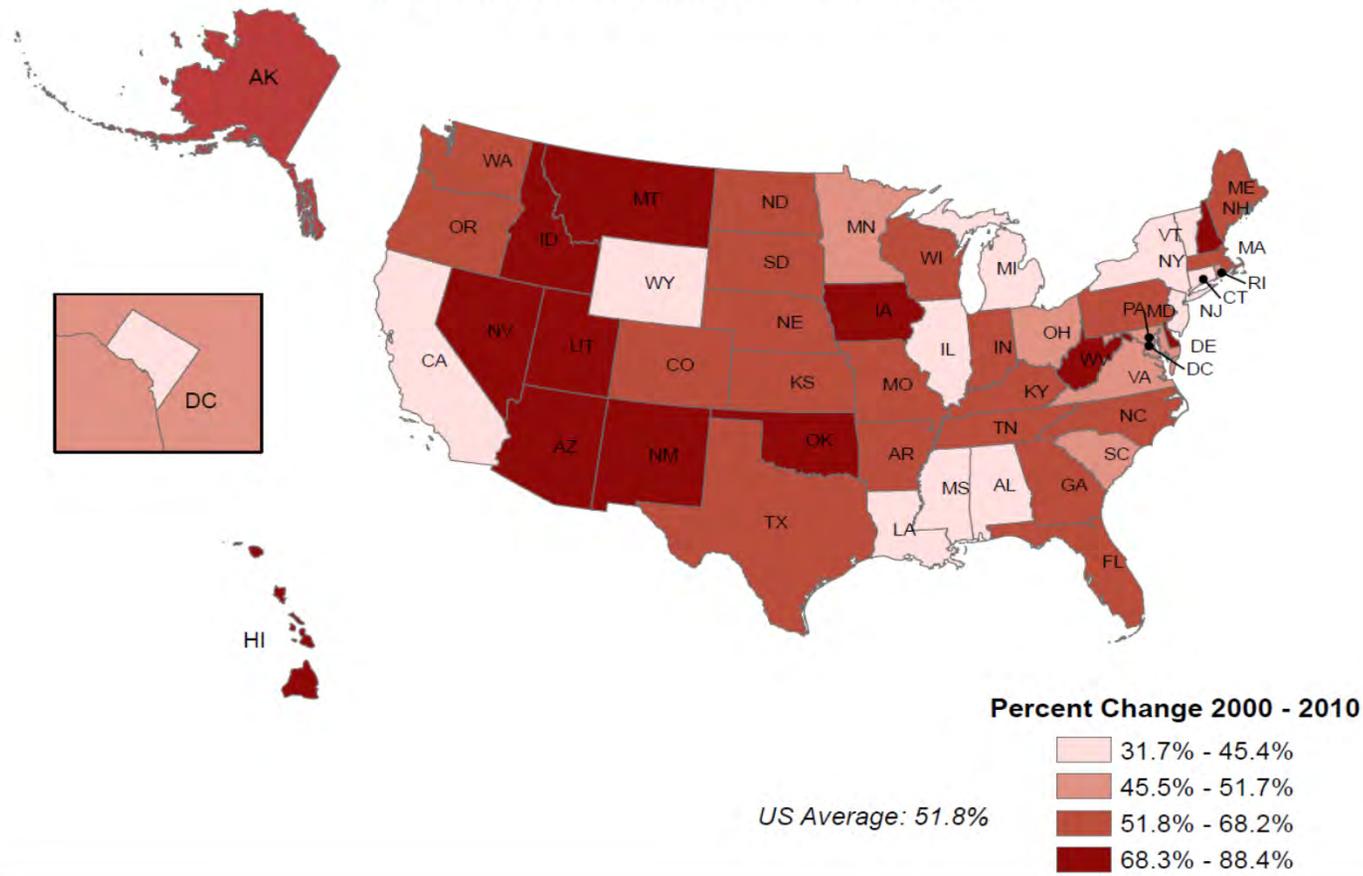
SOURCE: US Census Bureau

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/pop-profile/natproj.html>

Why should we discuss cultural competence?

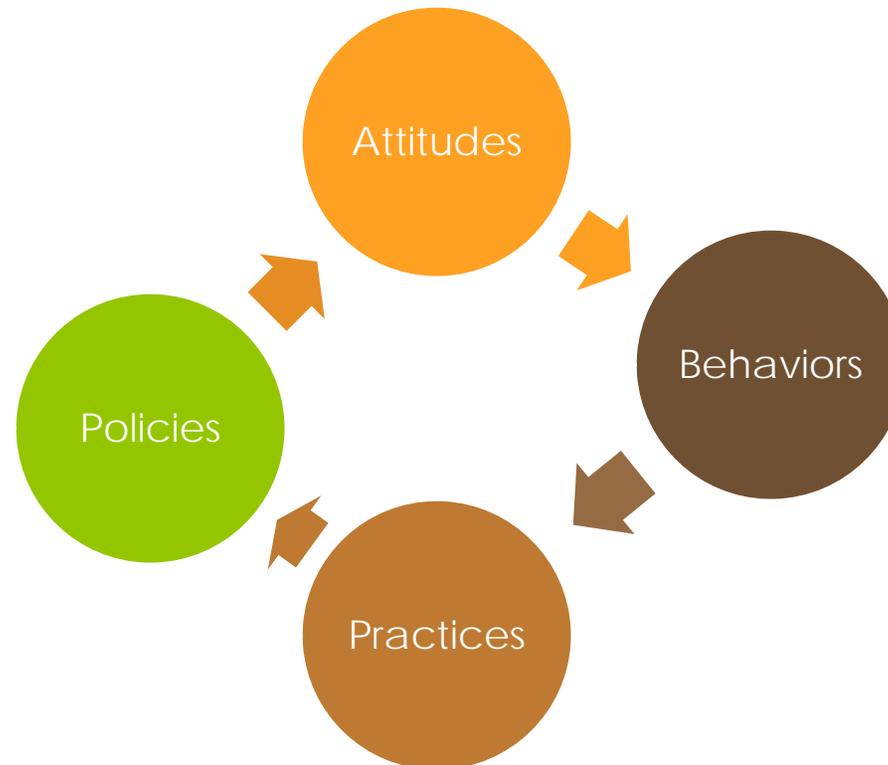
- Changes in number of same-sex households

Map 2a. Percent Growth in All Same-sex Couple Households: Census 2000 – 2010



What is cultural competence?

All the components working together to enable effective work in cross-cultural situations



How attitudes and beliefs are formed

Your cultural communication is influenced by expectations, values, beliefs, language, communication styles – and may influence your perception of what you see and experience.

1. What are my family's expectations about responsibility, dependability, and getting the job right the first time?
2. What are my family's expectations around time and punctuality?
3. What are my family's language use – tone, loudness, words?
4. What are my family's non-verbal communication – closeness, eye contact, hands?
5. What are my family's ways of acting/acceptance of others who are different?
6. What are my family's beliefs and/or expectations based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, levels of ability, age and/or gender?

Cross-Cultural Skills

1. Using an Asset-Based Perspective
2. Maintaining Boundaries
3. Perception
4. Cultural Communication (Elliott)
5. Trust
6. Interpersonal & Task Completion Communication



Asset-Based Perspective

- Acknowledging that within the community-based partnerships exists the creativity, hope, and skills to address the community's needs.
- Creating a reciprocal learning experience.
- Taking note of the solutions, not just the problems that exist in the daily happenings at the SL site.
- Seek out the lessons to be learned in each experience and being open to what's possible.

Question: What can your service-learning client or partner teach you?

Boundaries

- Confidentiality
- Sharing personal information
- Driving people in your vehicle
- Completing a task that is someone else's responsibility
- Giving out your personal contact information
- Addressing someone by informal name vs. formal name
- Wearing inappropriate clothing
- Talking or texting on your phone when on the job

Question: What boundaries do you need to be mindful of at your service site?

Perception

First Impression – The initial impressions we form of others that tend to be the basis around which other impressions are built.

Interpretation – To give your impressions meaning. To draw conclusions about what you're seeing that is influenced by your experiences, needs, values, beliefs, expectations, physical and emotional state, etc.

Perceptual Accentuation – The process of seeing what you expect and want to see.

Stereotyping – A fixed impression of a group of people i.e. images of national, religious, or racial groups – or perhaps criminals, prostitutes, teachers, plumbers. Can lead to characterizing a member of a group all the characteristics you've assigned to that group.

Empathy – To put yourself in someone else's shoes. To see the world as others' see it; to feel what they feel.



1. First
Impression

2. Interpretation

3. Perceptual
Accentuation

4. Stereotyping

5. Empathy



Perception Test

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=vJG698U2Mvo#!

Cultural Communication Patterns (Elliott)

Purpose of understanding cultural communication patterns is to identify areas of difference between ethnic groups that can undermine trust when the differences are unknown. These unknown differences can create difficulties when differences are assumed to be caused by personality.

- 1. Animation/Emotional Expression and Gestures**
- 2. Directness of Questions and Answers**
- 3. Directness of Eye Contact - when listening; when talking**
- 4. Space**
 1. Intimate distance – touching to 18 inches
 2. Personal – 18 to 4 feet
 3. Social – 4 to 12 feet
 4. Public – 12 to 25 feet
- 5. Identity Orientation**
- 6. Time**
- 7. Vocal Patterns**

Question: What is your Normative Communication Style?

Cross-Cultural Skills: Trust



- Pay attention to all the little interactions
- Acknowledge others' strengths – look for common interests and positive qualities rather than difference and weaknesses.
- Use active non-judgmental listening
- Get to know people; reach out.
- Demonstrate that you're accountable, competent, and honest.

Question: Which of these can you use at your site to build trust?

More Communication Skills

Listening:

- Work at listening
- Resist distractions
- Keep your mind open
- Listen for ideas
- Mentally summarize what has been said
- Listen between the lines

Facilitation Skills

- Listening
- Nonverbals
- Paraphrasing
- Open-ended Questions
- Positive Response
- Asking for specifics and different points of view
- Summarizing and Bridging

Question: What listening and facilitation skill will be most helpful at your service site?



Cultural Communication Critical Incidents

Christine (a Caucasian woman) is working at a battered women's shelter as part of a Women's Studies course. The women (and some teens) at the shelter are working towards independence through gaining life skills. One lifestyle issue that sometimes gets overlooked is the importance of nutrition. Christine decided to do a series of workshops on the importance of healthy eating. During one session, Christine plans to have the women create menus for the week composed of healthy dishes. While introducing the topic, an African American woman, Yvette, begins to tell stories about using SNAP (food stamps) in the grocery store, and then a personal story about running out of food for her daughter. She is very direct in her conversation, maintains continuous eye contact with some of the women, and interrupts often to get her point across. Some women participate in the conversation while others are visibly uncomfortable. Christine wants to get back to the agenda and notices how quickly time is passing. She is able to re-direct the conversation and start the activity and while walking around, Christine sees a young Hispanic mom who is not writing. When Christine asks if she can help, Lidia responds with her head down, "This is stupid. I'm not doing it." Christine notices that many of the names are misspelled on a menu. Christine isn't sure of the best way to approach her so she can help her feel more positive about the exercise.

What were some of the **unpredictable needs** that arose in this scenario?

What **perception** terms could be used to understand and navigate through this scenario (e.g. first impression, interpretation, perceptual accentuation, stereotyping, empathy)?

What **boundaries** are important to maintain in this scenario?

What **cultural communication patterns** (as defined by Elliott) are present? What cultural patterns (Christine's or the women's) should Christine be **sensitive to** when working with the women?

Is Christine using **asset-based perspective**? What might she do differently?

What **listening and/or facilitation skills** can Christine use?

Identify a communication scenario at your service site. Which of these principles can you use to open up communication and build bridges?

Role Play

CP Rochester

Scenario:

A CP Rochester consumer is asking personal questions about whether you have a boyfriend or girlfriend or not. One of you play the consumer and the other the Fisher SL student. How should you respond? How can you use this as a teachable moment? Expand on this conversation with your own scenario.

Monroe HS After-School Program

Scenario:

You're meeting with a Greenhouse club teen who has volunteered to be in charge of purchasing the plants. You ask what his ideas are. He says, "I don't know", shrugs, and looks down. How should you respond? How can you use this as a teachable moment? Expand on this conversation with your own scenario.

How do we achieve it?

A Summary

- Understand we can't know everything about every group of people. Be careful of *stereotyping*, but allow yourself to make some generalizations
- Cultural sensitivity comes when human differences are celebrated instead of viewed with skepticism (Watkins & Braun).
- Instead of treating others like you'd like to be treated – treat others like they would like to be treated. It's insensitive to interact with others purely based on your own beliefs and assumptions about others (Watkins and Braun).
- Meet people where they are and acknowledge cultural differences. View behavior within a cultural context.