Building Cross-Cultural Partnerships in Public Health

Presentation Objectives

1. Discuss a definition of cultural competency.

2. List three dimensions of cultural competency that impacts cross-cultural partnerships.

3. Identify the skills of cross-cultural relationships and communications with partners.

4. Describe the stepwise process of creating culturally competent partnerships.
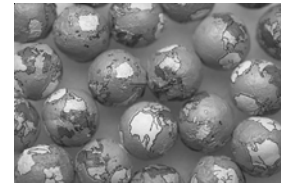
A Partnership

A *Partnership* is a mutually supportive relationship based upon achieving a common goal.

- The *common goal* is healthcare delivery to a multicultural population
- *A mutually supportive relationship* is based upon understanding, trust, and mutual commitment

Diversity Defined

Diversity is an *inclusive* and *caring environment* where differences are valued and integrated into working relationships in order to:

- *provide adequate resources to a diverse customer base*
- *establish sensitivity and understanding to the unique needs of different cultural groups*
- *establish partnerships where understanding differerences help to maximize the effectiveness* and efficiency** of delivery services*

* *Effectiveness* refers to maximizing performance by utilizing the best system of operation e.g., partnering, teaming, empowerment, and self-management.

** *Efficiency* refers to maximizing the use of resources, e.g., people, money, time, or tangibles.

Cultural Competency

Cultural Competency is the ability to work effectively with and/or serve culturally and ethically different population groups. It involves,

- an *experiential* understanding, awareness, and respect for the beliefs, values, and ethics of other cultures

- the cross-cultural skills necessary for delivering services and working with diverse individuals and groups

Three Critical Proficiencies

The three critical proficiencies of cultural competency are:

- *Cultural intelligence* – experiential knowledge of other cultures

- *Cultural transformation* – dealing with ethnocentrism

- *Cross-cultural skills* – the ability to relate, communicate, and deliver services across cultural dimensions

Cultural competency is initiated by a *need* or a *desire* to acquire the skills to work with and/or serve multicultural populations.

Cultural Knowledge – The First Dimension

Culture refers to the beliefs, values, ethics, and customs that control and influence the behaviors of an individual or a group.

Culture,

- determines one's worldview (as truth)

- and language are inseparable

- influences how we work with others

- is a reflection of how things are done and expectations of those in power

Culture and Ethnic Groups

Most non-Western ethnic cultures are group-oriented. Prominent characteristics are the following:

- Hispanic Americans are strongly family-oriented

- African Americans are strongly influenced by their church

- Native Americans are highly spiritual

- Asian Americans are inseparable from the group

(see Appendix for other cultural descriptions)

Group-Oriented Values in Establishing Cross-Cultural Partnerships

The key group-oriented values in establishing cross-cultural partnerships include:

- *Trust* in your word and support

- *Respect* for our values and culture

- *Honesty* in our personal and business dealings

- *Sensitivity* to our unique views, needs, and shortcomings

- *Face* in terms of public interactions

Cultural Transformation – The Second Dimension

The second dimension in becoming culturally competent is cultural transformation. It involves a four step process:

- Engagement

- Introspection

- Inner Confrontation

- Transformation

resulting in the experience of humility and the acquisition of wisdom.

A Nugget of Wisdom

In conflicting situations with others, a "nugget of wisdom" is

*"That which I dislike most about others
is a mirror reflection of myself."*

Cross-Cultural Skills – The Third Dimension

The third dimension of cultural competence is cross-cultural relationship and communication. The key elements are to understand that:

- values, relationship, and communication are inseparable

- communication is an expression of relationship

- mutual core values establish the basis for natural compatible relationships

- quality cross-cultural relationships must be learned by the three steps we have defined

The Cross-Cultural Dimensions of Diversity

The of diversity that are commonly experienced in cross-cultural partnerships as well as delivery of services are:

- race
- sex
- culture
- ethics/values
- language
- relationship and communication styles

- power
- workstyle
- age
- religion
- ethnicity
- leadership/ management styles

These either play out productively, when managed, or counterproductively when little or no awareness exists.

Cross-Cultural Skills-Building – Toolbox

1. Non-Western cultures tend to be group-oriented — dominated by cooperation, collaboration, and consensus.

2. Non-Western cultures tend to focus on non-verbal cues in communication rather than what is verbally expressed.

3. For vitally important communications, face-to-face interaction is preferred.

4. Be sensitive to the understanding of others in terms of Eurocentric written documents.

5. Effective administration in a cross-cultural partnership requires mastery and integration of both task and relationship orientation.

6. Continual feedback and communication to high context/polychronic individuals is important rather than timely communications only.

7. Mentoring and coaching relationships provide opportunities for teaching and learning.

8. Cross-cultural conflict and missed expectations are key "learning opportunities;" remember, there's no such thing as a one-sided problem.

9. Master the skill of "subliminal listening" or "reading between the lines" as well as non-verbal cues in communicating.

"I know you believe that you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."

Anonymous

*Realizations*
William A. Guillory, Ph.D.

Cultural Transformation – Second-Order Change

A person's *attitude* is determined by what he or she *believes*, which in turn creates his or her *mind-set*.

A person's mind-set determines his or her *behavior*.

To understand your mind-set, examine the *results* you produce.

Mind-set Attitude Beliefs	→	Behaviors	→	Results

First-Order Change

Second-Order Change
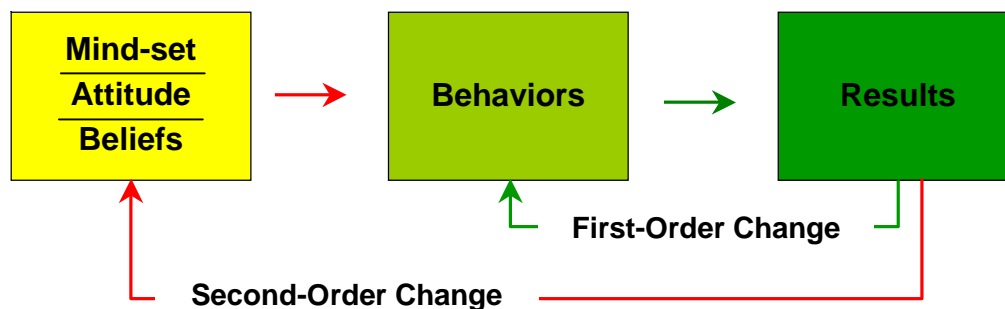
First- and Second-Order Change*

First-order change is characterized by making several behavioral or procedural changes where the original problem or situation remains or returns, e.g., "diets that don't work," "behavioral (only) approach to diversity," "time management," — no change in core beliefs or values. (*The problem persists in a different form*)

Second-order change is characterized by transformation of one's attitude, values, or belief structures and results in permanent change of one's mind-set, e.g., "mid-life career change," "personal or organizational transformation," "acceptance of others with fundamentally different values." (*The problem is permanently resolved*)

* Bateson, Gregory. Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity. New York: Dutton, 1979.
  Berquist, William. The Modern Organization: Mastering the Art of Irreversible Change.
  San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

Partnership Building Activity – Second-Order Change

Complete the following exercise by responding to the question and statement below.

What is the cross-cultural characteristic (or source of conflict) you find *most difficult* to adapt to with a partner you are working with, reporting to, or serving? e.g., *too* relationship or task oriented, communication style, *too* team or individualistic, etc.

List three behaviors you experience this partner or coalition exhibits that are consistent with the characteristic above:

1.

2.

3.

The Experience of Humility – A Paired Exercise

That which we do
not want others
to see or admit
about ourselves

← { Hidden | Visible } →
      Side | Side
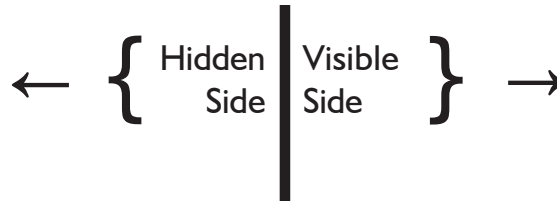
That which we
want others to
see and believe
about ourselves

Questions for Reflection, Introspection, and In-depth Sharing:

1. Have there been times in your life when you behaved consistent with one or all of the descriptions on the previous page?

    Yes _____   No _____   Explain (shared exercise)

2. Do you believe the characteristic you described on the previous page is also true about you?

    Yes _____   No _____   Why? (shared exercise)

3. If the behaviors you wrote on the previous page *were* true about you, what do you perceive the consequences to you would be? What type of person would you *perceive* yourself to be? (shared exercise)

*"Our self-perception of someone undesireable
tends to block the process of transformation
and hence the experience of humility,
equality, and wisdom."*

William A. Guillory, Ph.D.
Spirituality in the Workplace

Rite of Passage to Partnership Building – The Stepwise Process

Partnership building involves:

- *engagement*

- *introspection*

- *inner confrontation*

- *transformation*

— which results in humility and the experience of equality.

Nugget of Wisdom

*"That which I dislike most in others is a
mirror reflection of myself."*

The Stepwise Process of Achieving Culturally Competent Partnerships

1. Establish quality cross-cultural relationships.

2. Acquire an in-depth understanding of the ways multicultural communities are best served.

3. Acquire an in-depth understanding of the history and cultural values of multicultural groups.

4. Understand that non-Western cultures view wellness from a holistic point-of-view: body, mind, and spirit.

5. Consider a Multicultural Advisory Board.

6. Establish a process integrating these items into your working partnerships.

The Asian Culture – Group-Oriented*

1. The core of Asian society is that the individual exists within the framework of the group.

2. Asians tend to be human relationship oriented — "we're all in this together."

3. Teamwork, cooperation, and collaboration are the dominant modes of operation.

4. Business and working relationships are based upon respect, communication, and trust — typically earned over time.

5. Events are viewed within a context — there are no absolute rules, it depends on the situation.

6. Harmony is of prime importance — there is a reluctance to say "no."

7. Decisions are usually made by consensus, where appropriate and timely from a business perspective.

8. "*Face*" is of prime importance — reflected by non-verbal cues of respect, sensitivity, and perception of the situation.

9. Mutual interdependence among and within the group is essential — there is less emphasis on "stars," more on "group success."

10. Day to day interaction is strongly influenced by dominant religions, these include Taoism, Buddhism, Muslim, and others.

* Asian culture refers to the people of Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Chinese, and others of Southeast Asia.

The Hispanic Culture – People-Oriented*

1. The core of Hispanic society is family — both direct and extended.

2. Business or service is based upon quality relationships.

3. Relationships are built over time in terms of trust, respect, and communication.

4. Systems and processes are flexible to meet the needs of people.

5. People's well-being is of prime importance.

6. Time, where appropriate, is unstructured and tends to be slower.

7. The preservation of "face" is essential in business and working relationships.

8. Hispanics tend to be communal in terms of service and supporting the members of their community.

9. Religion (dominantly Roman Catholic) is ingrained in most Hispanic traditions and core values.

10. Face-to-face communication is of prime importance.

* Hispanic culture refers to the people of Mexican and South American lineage.

The African American Culture – Family-Oriented

1. The core of the African American culture is the extended family — which is inclusive of the nuclear family, e.g., close family friends are referred to as "Uncle _____."

2. The Church (dominantly Protestant and Baptist) is the foundation of the community — and commonly encompasses religious, social, and political activities.

3. African Americans tend to be highly expressive in communication and relationships — particularly among other African Americans — and can be viewed as "highly emotional people."

4. African Americans tend to be more supportive of each other rather than competitive — in terms of professional success.

5. African Americans tend to "stick together" probably resulting from the sense that they have not "made it" in American society as a group.

6. Most African Americans tend to be supportive of an activist role where unfairness or injustice appears to exist, e.g., the Civil Rights Movement.

7. A majority of African Americans view education as the key to their success and providing a support system for those less successful. (This commitment is viewed more as a "calling" than an obligation)

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