

**EDPY 442: INTRODUCTION TO COUNSELLING**  
 Counselling in a Multicultural & Diverse Society  
 October 23, 2007

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POINTS TO CONSIDER AND REFLECT ON...

- How do you understand, define, and use the following words in reference to yourself, others, and your work???
- Culture
- Multicultural
- Diversity
- In what way would these terms/concepts be important in counselling psychology and therapy?
- Why study multicultural counselling as a separate topic?




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WHAT IS CULTURE?

- The term *culture* is defined broadly as the shared learned experiences, beliefs, and values of people belonging to a specific group that structure their behaviour, thoughts, perceptions, goals, morals, and cognitive processes
- Pederson (1994) defines culture as: "A shared pattern of learned behaviour that is transmitted to others in the group?"
- Text defines culture as: "Any group of people who identify or associate with one another on the basis of a common purpose, need or similarity background?"




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### CULTURE CONT'D ...

- The construct of culture encompasses various types of diversity through inclusion of *ethnographic variables, demographic variables, and status variables*.
- *Ethnographic variables*: include race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and language
- *Demographic variables*: include age, gender, generational status, and place of residence
- *Status variables*: include social, educational, and economic background, physical ability/disability, and patterns of social affiliation, such as sexual orientation




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### WHAT DOES MULTI-CULTURAL MEAN?

- Can be understood then as smaller sub-groups with distinct uniqueness that exist within a larger group or population

Consider the following: How is uniqueness defined?? What should be categorized within and across group similarities vs. differences? Race, language, nationality, employment status? Where do we draw the line?




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### WHAT IS MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING?

- According to the text, multicultural counselling is "any counselling relationship in which the counsellor and the client differ"
- Differences may be with respect to ethnographic, demographic, or status variables.

Question: What do you think of this definition?




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### CULTURAL BIASES IN COUNSELLING

- o The idea of counsellor neutrality in response to a client's cultural background or characteristics is a fallacy
- o We can hold various biases based on cultural beliefs, values, gender, sexual orientation, and generational differences that are inherent in some counselling theories and techniques
- o FIVE different types of biases are evident in the counselling field and need to be kept in mind when working with members of different cultural groups




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### CULTURAL BIASES IN COUNSELLING CONT'D

1. Androcentric biases occur when male-oriented constructs and principles are used to draw conclusions about human nature across both genders
2. Gender biases occur when theories or counselling approaches propose two separate paths of development for men and women, without taking into account the separate influences of nature versus nurture (e.g., Oedipal and Electra complexes in Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory)




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### CULTURAL BIASES IN COUNSELLING CONT'D

3. Ethnocentric biases occur when we assume that human development, interaction patterns, and relationships are similar across different cultures, races, and nations, as well as what is considered to be important in life and to represent a meaningful existence (e.g., assuming that all people share a world-view that is future-oriented, time rigid, emotion focused etc)
4. Heterosexism is the belief that a heterosexual orientation is normal and optimal, whereas same-sex relationships are omitted or considered abnormal (DSM)




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### CULTURAL BIASES IN COUNSELLING CONT'D

- 5. Intrapsychic bias occurs when people's problems and behaviours are attributed to factors within the person, rather than to what's happening in the external environment or social/cultural context, often leading counsellors to blame the victim
- o A focus on changing the person in counselling versus taking into account the environment can ignore experiences of discrimination against people based on race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or age




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### COUNSELLING ETHNIC, RACIAL, AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE GROUPS

#### Understanding & Acknowledging White Privilege

- o By virtue of skin color and membership in the dominant group in society, counsellors who are White are inherently privileged in relation to members of other cultural groups
- o It is essential to understand that people of other races and cultural backgrounds may not share the same privileges or life experiences

#### **Brainstorm????**

How is White Privilege manifested in school system?




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### COUNSELLING ETHNIC, RACIAL, AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE GROUPS

#### Assessing Cultural Normativity

- o Different cultural groups sometimes have unique ways of expressing themselves that we can mistakenly judge as abnormal and target for change in counselling, or mistakenly ignore
- o EMIC processes- refer to emotions, cognitions, and behaviours that are considered to be specific or unique to a given cultural group
- o ETIC processes- refs to emotions, cognitions, and behaviours that are considered to be culturally universal




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### ASSESSING CULTURAL NORMATIVITY CONT'D

- There are 2 types of errors that can be made in the counselling process with ethnic and cultural minorities:

-Type 1 errors: involve mistakenly identifying a cultural normative cognition, emotional process, or behaviour as abnormal

-Type 2 errors: involve failing to identify a cognition, emotional process, or behavior that warrants attention in counselling due to the assumption that it is normative for a given cultural group

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### ASSESSING CULTURAL NORMATIVITY CONT'D

- The concepts of emic and etic are also applied to helping styles or approaches
- Emic helping styles are the natural and normal ways of dealing with problems, achieving goals, or promoting healing that stem from within a specific culture
- Etic helping styles are generic counselling theories or techniques that may be applicable to people from a variety of cultures
- In assessing cultural normativity and appropriateness of various counselling approaches we need to consider a client's level of ACCULTURATION

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### THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS

- Berry (2001) defines acculturation as a process of sociocultural transition in which cultural minorities in pluralistic societies make two related decisions:
  - A decision about how much of their unique cultural heritage they will retain or give up in order to become like the other members of the host society
  - A decision about their desired level of interaction with member of other ethnic groups
- There is as much variability within cultures as there is across cultures because each person will retain and relinquish aspects of his/her heritage to a different degree

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## COUNSELLING ETHNIC, RACIAL, AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE GROUPS

### Understanding Clients' History

- In counselling others from diverse cultural groups, there are a number of different types of historical factors we need to take into account to be able to relate to our clients, and to assess their presenting concerns or problems accurately
- Important points to consider:
  - history of inter group relations and Social/Political Environment




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## UNDERSTANDING CLIENTS' HISTORY CONT'D

- Important Points to Consider Cont'd:
  - History of Gender Relations. Some cultures separate males and females throughout their youth or socialize them in a different way towards different life goals
  - History with Major Societal Systems. Differences between systems in immigrants' or refugees' countries of origin and the system in Canada, may create conflicts or problems that become the focus of counselling or mediation
- it is important to be aware of the "culturally encapsulated counsellor"




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## COUNSELLING SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

### Consider:

- Information about specific populations should be viewed as general guidelines and provide a starting place to orient the counsellor
- Always talk to the client about their own view and be open to individual differences and considerations
- Maintain a position of curiosity and interest
  - ***the client is your best teacher***
- Aim to understand your client's needs




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COUNSELLING SPECIFIC POPULATIONS  
CONT'D...

- Specific cultural populations
- Aged populations
- Gender –based counselling
- Sexual orientation
- Disabilities and Special Needs

**Brainstorm????**

What are **some** things to keep in mind when  
counselling the populations above? What **might**  
be some issues that arise?




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