

# Cultural Competence in Mental Health Care: Considerations and Examples

Guest Lecture

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# Who is Robert Wright?

- A registered SW Private Practitioner with endorsements in direct practice and forensics
- Former Sessional Lecturer MSVU – Child & Youth Studies, Education
- Former Race Relations Coordinator of the Dartmouth District School Board
- Former Executive Director, Child & Youth Strategy of Nova Scotia
- PhD Student in Sociology at Dal – Race, Identity, Power

# Cultural Competence: Why?

- Cultural competence is being recognized as foundational knowledge for health care professionals. (Nova Scotia produced a Cultural Competence Guide for Primary Health Care Professionals in 2005)

# How Are We Doing?

- Not so well:
  - “Many [diverse] populations have been underserved or not served by the existing [mental health] system for generations. Diverse populations experience barriers to service resulting in a higher burden of illness and greater risk for mental health and addictions problems.”

# Federal Corrections

- “In releasing his [2013] report, the Correctional Investigator . . . noted that recent inmate population growth is almost exclusively driven by increases in . . . ethnically and culturally diverse offenders. Over the past 10 years, the Aboriginal incarcerated population increased by 46.4% while visible minority groups . . . increased by almost 75%. During this same time period, the population of Caucasian inmates actually declined by 3%.”

# Cultural Competence: Definition

- Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Cultural competence comprises five essential capacities. We must:
  - A. understand our own cultural positions and how they differ from and are similar to others
  - B. understand the social and cultural reality in which we live and work and in which our clients live and work
  - C. cultivate appropriate attitudes towards cultural difference
  - D. be able to generate and interpret a wide variety of verbal and non-verbal responses
  - E. understand structural oppression and demonstrate awareness and commitment to social justice

# A) Nichols' Model for Understanding Cultural Difference

Philosophical Perspective on Cultural Difference. Edwin Nichols (cf. work of Jung)

Different world cultures developed out of differing physical environments.

These world views have differing constructs:

- Axiology (values)
- Epistemology (way of knowing)
- Logic (principles of reason)
- Process (practice of reason)

# THE PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE DEVELOPED BY EDWIN J. NICHOLS, PH.D.

ETHNIC GROUPS ETHNIC WORLDVIEW	AXIOLOGY	EPISTEMOLOGY			LOGIC	PROCESS
		APPLIED	PEDAGOGY	METHODOLOGY		
<b>EUROPEAN</b> <b>EURO-AMERICAN</b>	<b>Member-Object</b> The highest value lies in the object or the acquisition of the object	<b>One knows through Counting and Measuring</b>	<b>Parts to Whole</b>	<b>Linear and Sequential</b> <i>-Assembly line-</i>	<b>Dichotomous</b> <i>Either/Or</i> <i>-Newtonian theory-</i>	All sets are repeatable and reproducible <i>-Technology-</i>
<b>AFRICAN</b> <b>AFRICAN AMERICAN</b> <b>LATINO/A</b> <b>ARAB</b>	<b>Member-Member</b> The highest value lies in the relationships between persons	<b>One knows through Symbolic Imagery and Rhythm (function)</b> <i>-Gladwell <u>Blink</u>-</i>	<b>Whole Holistic Thinking</b> <i>-The BIG picture-</i>	<b>Critical Path analysis</b> <i>-Cut to the chase-</i>	<b>Diunital</b> <i>Union of opposites</i> <b>Difrasismo</b> <i>-Aztec thought-</i> <b>The In Between</b> <i>Ibn 'Arabi</i> <i>-Quantum theory-</i>	All sets are interrelated through human and spiritual networks <i>-Black church-</i>
<b>ASIAN</b> <b>ASIAN AMERICAN</b> <b>POLYNESIAN</b>	<b>Member-Group</b> The highest value lies in the cohesiveness of the group	<b>One knows through Transcendental Striving</b> <i>-Tree the forest-</i>	<b>Whole and parts are seen simultaneously</b> <i>-To read a Chinese word-</i>	<b>Cyclical and Repetitive</b> <i>-Stroke order in writing a Chinese word-</i>	<b>Nyaya</b> <i>-The objective world is conceived independent of thought and mind-</i> <i>-Chaos theory-</i>	All sets are independently interrelated in the harmony of the universe <i>-Keiretsu-</i>
<b>NATIVE AMERICAN</b>	<b>Member-Great Spirit</b> The highest value lies in oneness with the Great Spirit	<b>One knows through Reflection and Spiritual Receptivity</b> <i>-Purification rites-</i>	<b>Whole is seen in cyclic movement</b> <i>-Seasons-</i> <i>-Medicine Wheel-</i>	<b>Environmentally experiential reflection</b> <i>-Rites of Passage-</i>	<b>Great Mystery</b> <i>-A set of 4 and a set of 3 form the whole-</i> <i>-Super string theory-</i>	All sets are interrelated through the elements, plant, animal, and spiritual networks <i>-White Buffalo-</i>



# Exploring Values Differences

<b>European</b>	<b>African/Arab /Latino</b>
<p>Member-Object</p> <p>The highest value lies in the object or the acquisition of the object</p>	<p>Member-Member</p> <p>The highest value lies in the relationships between persons</p>

# Forensic Application

## Boy gets 3 years in custody for 2013 shooting

THE CHRONICLE HERALD

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A 17-year-old boy has been given a three-year sentence in a provincial youth facility for the attempted murder of another teen outside the North Preston Community Centre.

Halifax youth court Judge Anne Derrick sentenced the North Preston teenager, whose identity is protected, to the maximum penalty allowed for a young offender, rejecting the Crown's application for an adult sentence.

"I find that when (the offender) shot (the victim) he was not a hardened, criminally sophisticated teenager who had the makings of an effective mercenary," Derrick said Friday. "He was a vulnerable young person with a reduced capacity for moral judgment."

The judge said an adult sentence would likely derail the boy's chances for rehabilitation.

"It is obvious that the sentence that best promotes rehabilitation and reintegration is the one that best protects the public," she said.

The boy was found guilty last December of attempted murder and three firearm-related charges in connection with the shooting of a 15-year-old boy in April 2013. He has already spent 19 months in custody at the Nova Scotia Youth Facility in Waterville, but Derrick imposed a further three-year custody and supervision order.

Derrick also ordered the offender to appear before her again next May so she can see whether rehabilitation efforts are working.

"I will be expecting to hear you have been making good progress," she told him.

In a 71-page decision that she read out in court Friday, Derrick called the crime "a chillingly violent act."

The accused and the victim both grew up in North Preston

and their grandfathers are brothers. They had known each other since they were very young, but their relationship began deteriorating by elementary school and their arguments and fights began escalating.

On April 15, 2013, at about 5 p.m., the victim was talking to a friend on the outdoor basketball court when the offender, then 16, came out of woods with his face partially covered and shot him with a high-powered hunting rifle.

The victim was shot in the stomach and seriously injured but has made a full recovery.

At the time of the shooting, the offender "was an immature, dependent 16-year-old caught up in the dysfunctional dynamics of his community," Derrick said.

In deciding not to sentence him as an adult, Derrick weighed the sometimes conflicting evidence of different experts who assessed the accused, as well as evidence given by Robert Wright, an expert on race and cultural issues.

"Mr. Wright's evidence gives me a lens through which to view (the offender) in determining this application. And it suggests that (the offender's) character and maturity are still in a formative stage. Mr. Wright encountered a significantly conflicted young person, still located in his loving, prosocial family, who is struggling with his identity in the context of a criminally impacted community that has incubated mistrust, rivalries and violence."

Before the attempted murder, the offender had done time at Waterville for assault causing bodily harm and theft. He had also been the victim of a stabbing.

Derrick gave him a concurrent three-year sentence for using a firearm while committing attempted murder and a pair of 90-day concurrent sentences for unauthorized possession of a firearm and possession of a firearm knowing he did not have a licence or registration certificate.

- Black youth convicted of shooting another on basketball court of North Preston Rec Centre
- Crown desires an adult life sentence
- Court ordered assessments concur
- Impact of Race and Culture Assessment disagrees

# The Problem

- African Nova Scotians (ANS) are dramatically overrepresented among persons charged with drug offenses
- ANS are dramatically underrepresented among persons seeking substance abuse Tx
- Tx models seem to be less effective with ANS persons

# The Socio-cultural Model

- Previous models for understanding addictions poorly served ANS
  - Moral model – temperance the cure - 1700's
  - Disease model introduced - private medical tx (for the wealthy) the cure – 1870's
  - Disease model formalized – prohibition fails, gov. invests, AA born – 1930's
  - Disease model entrenched – industry partners onboard 1940's
  - Gender Diff. Acknowledged - Women for Sobriety est. – 1975
  - Attention to Minority Tx. – sociocultural model - 1980's

# Hx of African Substance Patterns

- Precolonial, culturally bounded, ritualized use:
  - Fireside use by nomadic traders
  - Hospitality shown to honored guests
  - Religious and ritualistic use
- Qat, Cannabis, fermented beverages, and a range of hallucinagens

# European Trade Triangle



# Sugar, Rum and People

- African persons stolen, shipped to America to farm sugar (and other crops)
- Sugar (and other crops) sent to Europe to be distilled and refined
- Foreign intoxicants (distilled alcohols) and trade goods shipped to Africa, disrupt local economy and cultural patterns of substance use
- Alcohol used as a mollifying agent to pacify enslaved Africans in America
- Entrenchment of culturally disrupted patterns of substance use among African Americans

# Emancipation's Influence

- Classes of African Americans emerge
  - Rural poor – those who remain in subsistence farming
  - Urban poor – establish the foundations of inner city ghettos
  - Working class – largely urban, later form the foundation of the Black middle class



# Early American Drug Attitudes

- By the late 1800's, perhaps influenced by prevalent use of morphine during civil war . . .
- Drugs – morphine, cocaine, cannabis – gain increasing popularity

# Great Awakening – Temperance

- Religious revivals in late 1700's and mid 1800's create push back against growing drug prevalence
- Temperance movement created the foundation for the policy of prohibition
- Prohibition in US 1920-1933, in Canada 1918-1920's

# Illegality of Substances

- Prohibition pushed urban drug and alcohol use underground
- Many speak easies and gin joints were established in African American ghettos
- White ethnic criminal organizations systematically recruit African American persons to traffic in narcotics

# Cultural Paradox of Substance Use

- Growing prevalence of drug use and trafficking in White community detracts from social and economic engagement
- Despite devastating effects of drugs in ANS communities, substance trafficking provides significant economic input to historically, socially and economically excluded peoples

# Fallacy of Re-habilitation

- Re-habilitation assumes use and addiction is the primary issue:
  - Assumes pro-social functioning pre-drug use
  - Assumes stopping use and returning is good

# Concept of Habilitation

- Habilitation promotes foundational socialization as its focus:
  - Acknowledge historical and systemic devastation of traditional cultural patterns
  - Acknowledges that “drug culture” may be substantially more functional than racialized location
  - Promotes critical analysis and efforts to reclaim pre-European contact level of cultural cohesion

# Sociocultural Treatment Model

- Critical curriculum that analyzes the past present and future of African Nova Scotian people
- Use of culturally appropriate & competent facilitators
- Group work focusses on community building
- Community development, political and social activism an essential component

# Additional Concepts

- Cultural shame
- Cultural pain
- Racial self-hatred
- Cultural intimidation
- Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome



# More Than Theory

- In R v "X", Judge Ann Derrick, in the Provincial Court of Nova Scotia found:
  - [198] I find [Mr. Robert Wright's testimony related to the impact of "X's" race and culture] raises significant questions about the assessment of "X" as a criminally-entrenched, sophisticated youth. It provides a more textured, multi-dimensional framework for understanding "X", his background and his behaviours. "X" has been both a perpetrator and a victim of violence in the context of his criminally-impacted community. Mr. Wright's evidence gives me a lens through which to view "X" in determining this application.

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# Q&A



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