Welcome to
Stockton University

Online Seminar in Field Instruction

(SIFI)

UNIT 6: Cultural Competence

Stockton MSW Program Mission

- As reported in the first session of this Seminar in Field Instruction:

- "The mission of Stockton's MSW Program is to educate social workers who are prepared for advanced-level practice with diverse individuals, families, and communities."

- "… the MSW Program aims to produce graduates who have a lifetime commitment to upholding human rights, respecting human diversity, and working towards social justice in their professional and personal lives."

Stockton's approach

- Advanced-level practice with diverse individuals, families, and communities requires an in-depth understanding of culture and working across cultural differences. Stockton's MSW curriculum infuses materials about culture, human rights, social justice, and skills of working with diverse client systems into each of its courses.

Culture

- According to NASW's *Standards of Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice* (2001), culture is "the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group. Culture often is referred to as the totality of ways being passed on from generation to generation. The term culture includes ways in which people with disabilities or people from various religious backgrounds or people who are gay, lesbian, or transgender experience the world around them."

Cultural Competence

- In order to be competent you must be responsive in an appropriate manner. Cultural responsiveness is an expectation of the NASW *Code of Ethics*, as well as an essential competency in the Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

- Cultural competency is an ethical obligation and should be frequently included in supervision discussions. Students in field should be encouraged to reflect on their classroom learning about cultural competence and working with diverse client systems.

Cultural Competence

Hensley (2016, p. 121) refers to this statement, which she attributes to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):

"While people often think of culture in terms of race or ethnicity there are many other elements—some that are easy to see and others that are hidden. Cultural competence means being respectful and responsive to health beliefs, practices, and cultural and linguistic needs of diverse population groups. Lastly, developing cultural competence is an evolving, dynamic process that takes time and occurs along a continuum."

Awareness

- Our life circumstances and experiences have shaped our cultural perspectives.

- Our biases, stereotypes and prejudices lie on a continuum of awareness.

- We all have been perpetrators and targets of prejudices, stereotypes and biases.

- There are many barriers to genuine and honest communication. We will not devalue the experience of diverse groups, rather we will listen with sensitivity and respect.

- Confidentially will be respected and maintained (Sue, 2010).

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Helping the student to become culturally competent

The work you will be doing with your student will involve helping the student to develop a sense of cultural competence and self-awareness.

Hendricks (2003, p.75) states "cultural competence does not come naturally to any social worker and requires a high level of professionalism and sophistication."

As a field instructor you will model and teach cultural competence.

Stages of Learning/Teaching Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice

(Hendricks, 2003)

Stage I	I'm afraid of saying the wrong thing	Cultural Awareness
Stage II	I jump in and hope for the best	Cultural Sensitivity
Stage III	Somehow I handle diverse clients quite well but I can't explain why	Beginning Cultural Competence
Stage IV	I am using the range of culturally competent knowledge, skills and values	Relative Mastery of Cultural Competency
Stage V	I can teach others about Cultural Competence	Teacher & Learner of Cultural Competence

Stages of Competency

- <u>Stage I,</u> may occur with young, new workers or re-occur with older, experienced workers/students. Discomfort often motivates social workers to go out of their way to provide quality services to clients, but students need supervision to understand or appreciate the culturally competent knowledge, skills and values they can glean from the experience. As workers/students struggle with Stage I, they learn some important things. They learn to appreciate and use their own cultural backgrounds and identities in understanding others.

(Hendricks, 2003)

Stages of Competency

- Stage II, students are still more sensitive to their own reactions than to the clients' needs, but they are beginning to understand what might be expected of them, and beginning to develop culturally sensitive approaches to practice.

- Supervisors need to provide a great deal of support and encouragement in Stage II, which may last a long time and is characterized by approval seeking and dependence on supervisors for praise and direction. Supervisors need enormous patience, acceptance, and non-judgmental attitudes towards their students.

(Hendricks, 2003)

Stages of Competency

- Stage III, This is a challenging stage in learning and teaching cultural competence. Students may think they have mastered diversity, but are soon brought down to earth by new diversity challenges.

- At this stage, students have some cultural self-awareness and sensitivity but still lack understanding about the factors contributing to diversity in social work practice.

- A great deal of learning can take place as workers honestly struggle to think for themselves, weigh their spontaneous responses, and consider a range of culturally appropriate interventions.

(Hendricks, 2003)

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Stages of Competency

- <u>Stage IV</u>, The goal of this stage is to both understand and control professional activity or actions.

- The science of cultural competence has been learned and integrated with the student's professional knowledge, skills and values. Culturally competent practice activities become second nature, and emotional responses are disciplined and connected to professional purpose.

- Supervisory meetings around cultural competence may take on a different tone and character during Stage IV as both supervisor and student/worker attempt to define and clarify culturally competent skills and knowledge.

(Hendricks, 2003)

Stages of Competency

- <u>Stage V</u>, There is a reciprocal flow of engagement between a social worker in interaction with others and from others back to the workers for the purpose of enabling workers to use everything they know to further their practice. Reynolds called this interconnectedness, which she described as a constantly flowing reflective loop of teaching and learning.

- Bogo and Vayda (1986), refer to this as the cyclical learning experience in which theory is integrated with practice.

- Cultural competence is never "finished" since stereotypical thinking is still possible despite a well-developed cultural self-awareness.

(Hendricks, 2003)

Social Work Staples

These techniques can help a social worker get through a situation in which s/he is not totally culturally competent but is aware of the role cultural differences are playing in the interaction with the client:

- Empathize (Enter the client's reality)
- Use active listening
- Be non-judgmental
- Support self-determination

Foundation For Connecting With The Client

- Respect

- Warmth

- Genuineness

- Empathy

- Interest & willingness to learn

- Humility

- Reflection

- Containment skills – patience, tolerate silence, listening

Not just the "facts"

- Reading a list of do's and don'ts about interacting with people of a particular culture is just a starting point. Beware of relying on it too much as it can lead to stereotyping.

- Diversity exists within ethnic or cultural groups.

- Individuals will have varying degrees of connection to their apparent culture.

Individuals

- Within the same culture there are many individual differences based on age, education, literacy, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, geographic location, life experience, etc.

- Think of the cultures and subgroups that you belong to. Would you want to be thought of as an example of how all people are in that particular group?

Continuum of Acculturation

- It is helpful to asses how "acculturated" your client is and to think about how that might affect the acceptance of help.

- Separation—Individuals hold onto their original cultural values and avoid interaction with other cultural groups.

- Marginalization—Low interest in relationships with others from different cultures.

- Integration—Cultural integrity is maintained while the individual participates in the larger social network.

- Assimilation—Individual from a non-dominant group does not wish to maintain their original culture and actively participates in the dominant culture.

Adapted from Administration on Aging, 2001

Common Human Reactions to People from Other Cultures

Ethnocentrism – belief that one's way is the best.

Fear – contact is avoided.

Denial – existence of the other group is denied.

Superiority – other group is considered inferior.

Minimization- the group is acknowledged, but the cultural differences are minimized (focus on "human" as the common point).

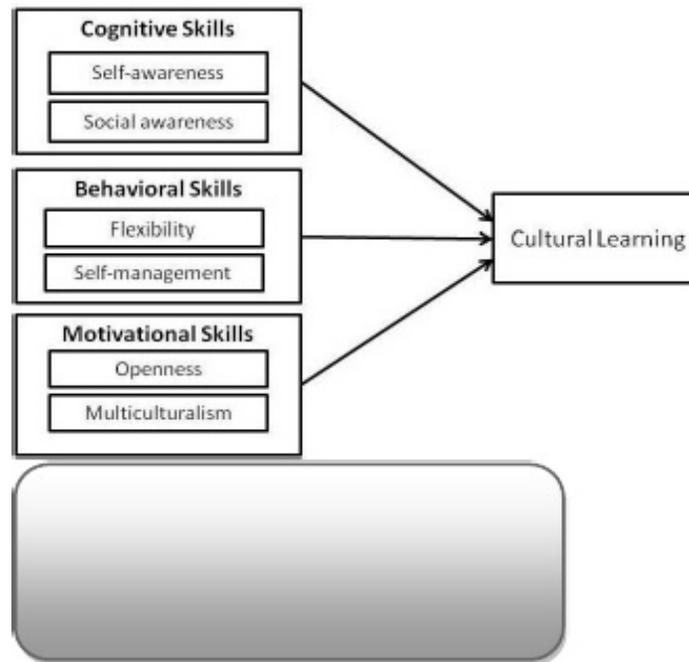Empathy – a more full understanding of how others perceive the world and how the world treats them.

Integration – comfort moving in and out of different cultures.

-Adapted from Center on an Aging Society, 2004

Paradigm Shift

The clinician must eventually shift from using his/her own culture as a benchmark for measuring all behavior and able to grasp a worldview that may be different from his/her own.

Cognitive Skills
- Self-awareness
- Social awareness

Behavioral Skills
- Flexibility
- Self-management

Motivational Skills
- Openness
- Multiculturalism

Cultural Learning

Cultural Phenomena Impacting Social Work Practice

The next few slides will cover each of these topics:

Nation of Origin

Communication

Time Orientation

Social Organization

Environmental Control

-adapted from Giger & Davidhizar, 2008.

Culturally Aware

Nation of Origin

- Understanding where the client came from
- US multicultural, pluralistic society
- By 2020 only 53% of the U.S. population will be white of European descent.
- Social work students need to learn to accurately assess and provide the kind of interventions that are culturally appropriate.

Social Organization

- Kinship groups
- Family structure - nuclear, single parent, gay, blended, multi-generational, communal etc.
- Religion and religious groups
- Rules - family, social, dietary, gender norms

Culturally Aware

Communication

- Language
- Dialect
- Intonation
- Use of silence
- Nonverbal actions – touch, facial expression, eye movement, body posture
- Humor

Space

- Personal space
- Proximity to others
- "Friendliness vs. threatening invasion"
- Space Addresses:
  - Influences how the home is set up
  - Security
  - Privacy
  - autonomy

Culturally Aware

Time

- Measurement/perception of time
  - Clock time
  - Historical time
  - Calendar time
  - Seasonal or periodic time

Time Orientation

- Present
- Past
- Future
- Time, pace and punctuality vary from culture to culture.

Environmental Control

- Use of formal services – wariness of "government" – true for many immigrant groups, issue for people in the US illegally.

- Traditional and folk medicine – Ask the client what they have already tried. This will help with insight into their beliefs in folk medicine.

- Belief/non belief in the modern health care system. Students may not be aware of health/mental health as a culturally sensitive belief and that there are levels of acceptance of "American" health care.

Ethos for clinicians

- Awareness of the influences that cultural factors have on clients and the clinical relationship
- Acceptance of the clinician's responsibility to understand the cultural aspects that affect the clinical relationship
- Willingness to make the clinical setting inviting
- Recognition of personal biases and beliefs
- Respect and tolerance for differences
- Acceptance of a responsibility to combat discrimination, value social justice

Adapted from Center on an Aging Society, 2004

Agency Cultural Competence

Individual workers may be culturally competent, but does the agency's structure and policies support cultural competence? Students are asked to think about this issue and they may want to discuss this with their field supervisor. Raising cultural competency awareness in your agency can be an interesting challenge and could become a mission in itself. Continuing education for staff is needed to keep the awareness of this issue high.

Areas of Cultural Competence In The Agency

- Mission statement
- Outreach efforts
- Structural barriers
- Language
- Availability of services
- Affordability of service
- Location of services - transportation
- Service hours

- Policies and procedures that support a culturally competent environment
- Fiscal support and incentives for the continuous improvement of cultural competence at the board, leadership and staff levels.
- Materials & resources that reflect the culture of the clients served

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