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Cultural Competence Module 3

Levels of Cultural Awareness:

Moving Toward Responsiveness

Rosanna Balistreri, B.A., M.A.
Cultural & Linguistic Subject Matter Expert & Consultant
REACH - reaching diversity
www.reach-diversity.com
Rosanna@reach-diversity.com

Rosanna Balistreri is a trilingual speaker of Spanish, Italian & English. She has dedicated her professional and academic background to foreign languages and applied linguistics and holds a B.A. in Applied Linguistics with a Certificate of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), an M.A. in Spanish Linguistics, and has undergone extensive training in Healthcare Interpreting, Cultural Diversity, and Leadership Skills.

Ms. Balistreri has served as President of the California Healthcare Interpreting Association (CHIA) for 2010 and 2011, and currently serves in several Advisory Boards as Cross-Cultural Communication & Language Access Expert. In 2007 she founded REACH - reaching diversity to provide Cultural & Linguistic Consulting Services and Solutions to the Health Care and Hospital sectors to enhance quality of care, increase patient safety and maximize customer satisfaction.

Module Estimated Time: 35-50 minutes

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of this module is to walk students through 4 typical levels of cultural awareness that gradually lead to readiness for responsiveness. The introduction of topics that have a universal and cultural value serve as a platform to reinforce the transition from Cultural Awareness to Cultural Responsiveness and provide insights on the different worldviews that exist.

Objectives:

Upon the completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Identify 4 typical levels of Cultural Awareness
2. Understand the direct correlation between the universal and the cultural aspects around Life, Death, Pain & Hunger
3. Create a universal vs. cultural correlation by giving example of at least one cultural interpretation

Terminology

Culture
Cultural Humility
Character
Individual Culture/Own culture
Group Culture/Others' culture
Self-Awareness
Awareness
Bias
Generalizations
Stereotypes
Thoughts
Feelings
Ideas
Patient Satisfaction
Misinterpretations
Misunderstandings
Universal concepts
Cultural Responsiveness
Death
Life
Pain
Hunger

Attitudes
To elicit
Perspectives
Bi-cultural
God
Meaning of life
Ontology
Soul
Philosophy
Cultural Interpretations
Dietary preferences

Additional terminology from previous modules

Music
Art
Food
Language
Gender
Dance
Literature
Drama
Dress

Holidays
Leadership
Spirituality
Ideas of cleanliness
Social Interaction
Celebrations
Modesty
Respect
Conception of Beauty
Attitude towards Elders
Patient/Provider Trust
Quality of care
Sexual Orientation
Definition of Obscenity
Individualism/Collectivism
Non-verbal
Communication
Kinship
Emotion
Time
Space and Proximity
Rewards and privilege

1. Introduction to 4 Typical Levels of Cultural Awareness (Lecture)

Time: 2-3 minutes

Materials: White Board and Erasable Markers or
Laptop/Computer
LCD Projector/Screen
Remote Control
PowerPoint of 4 Levels of Cultural Awareness

Preparation: Before class, prepare laptop, screen and LCD projector. Have remote control at hand to advance PowerPoint Slides. If Laptop and LCD Projector are unavailable, use White Board with Erasable Markers.

Slide 1.

- **Lecture -** Start Class by introducing the idea that there are 4 typical stages of Cultural Awareness that most people go through prior to learning how to become responsive.

- The reason why these levels exist is because of the natural human condition of having bias. It is only human to have bias and we all have them, regardless of what we think or say.

- These 4 typical level of awareness reflect behaviors and attitudes that begin with holding on to bias and slowly progress into a change of mindset that leads to cultural responsive behaviors and attitudes. These levels move from a state of closed-mindedness into a state of open-mindedness.

- So what are these 4 typical levels and how are they defined?

2. The 4 Levels of Cultural Awareness (Lecture & Whole Class Discussion)

Student groups draw their trees showing the line that separates the visible from the invisible parts of the tree, and then they brainstorm to fill each area with what they think are visible and non-visible cultural aspects.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: White Board and Erasable Markers or
Laptop/Computer
LCD Projector/Screen
Remote Control
PowerPoint of 4 Levels of Cultural Awareness

Preparation: Before class, prepare laptop, screen and LCD projector. Have remote control at hand to advance PowerPoint Slides. If Laptop and LCD Projector are unavailable, use White Board with Erasable Markers.

Lecture Content- Use the points below to frame your lecture

Slide 2.

- The first level is called the "*My Way is the Only Way"* level. At the first level, people are aware of their way of doing things, and they are set on the idea that their way is the only way. At this stage, they ignore the impact of cultural difference. This level is reflected both at the individual and organizational level. It means that a person, a party or an institution has assigned a certain value and that value is believed to be the only possible or right value.

- We are surrounded on a daily basis by this type of behavior and attitude. Our work environment may be populated with leaders who perform on this level of Awareness making it very difficult for employees to feel engaged or valued.

- *You may want to offer an example from your own experience as an icebreaker in order to motivate participants to share other examples based on their own experience (limit story-telling to one student per slide, unless you have additional time to add to module). One example of level one behavior is reflected by expressions like, "Why don't they speak English?"*

- *Questions you may want to ask to trigger classroom discussion: Would anybody like to share a quick anecdote that demonstrates a "My Way is the Only Way" behavior? How did that behavior make you feel? What happened as a result of your feelings?*

Slide 3.

- The second level is called *"I know your way, but my way is better."* At this level, also known as *"the ethnocentric stage",* people are aware of other ways of doing things, but still consider their way as the best one. In this stage, cultural differences are perceived as **the** source of problems and people tend to ignore them, reduce their significance, or adopt a condescending tone.

- *You may want to offer as an example the attitude toward non-Western medicine practices. Some providers are aware that they exist, but reduce their significance by giving value to Western medicine practices as being the only ones that patients should pay attention to.*

- *Questions you may want to ask to trigger classroom discussion: Would anybody like to share a quick anecdote that demonstrates a "I know you way, but my way*

is better" behavior? How did that behavior make you feel? What happened as a result of your feelings?

Slide 4.

- The third level of Cultural Awareness is the "My Way and Their Way." At this level people are aware of their own way of doing things and others' ways of doing things, and they choose the best way according to the situation.

- At this stage people realize that cultural differences can lead both to problems and benefits and are willing to use cultural diversity to create new solutions and alternatives. We can say that this is the level of progress toward open-mindedness since acceptance and recognition of cultural diversity occurs and culture is not seen just as a barrier, but also an opportunity.

- *As a segue to the previous example on attitude toward non-Western medicine, you might want to say that at this level a provider may acknowledge that although some alternative practices may not be formally recognized as a part of the conventional western medical practice, these may be an integral part of other cultures and could be added or included as part of the medical treatment if this is important to the patient.*

- *Questions you may want to ask to trigger classroom discussion: Can anybody think of any specific example to share with the rest of our group? What outcome was achieved as a result of this behavior?*

Slide 5.

- The last level of Cultural Awareness is the *"Our Way"* level. At this stage people no longer fear the cultural differences and communicate with others with confidence.

- This fourth and final stage brings people from different cultural background together for the creation of a culture of shared meanings. People dialogue repeatedly with others, create new meanings, new rules to meet the needs of a particular situation.

- Those who are at this level of Cultural Awareness are well equipped to become culturally responsive and create solutions that are inclusive of the diverse needs. For this reason this level could also be called a "Responsiveness Level".

- *You may want to offer as an example how Hoag Hospital Irvine, CA, has made adjustments to local Asian cultures by omitting a 4th floor. In Chinese the word for "four" sounds like the word for "death"; hence the number 4 is considered an unlucky number. Since the hospital serves a large Asian population, hospital administration has taken this seriously and decided that renaming flooring by*

skipping the fourth floor would help patients feel more comfortable as they navigated the facility.

- *Questions you may want to ask to trigger classroom discussion: What other examples would you like to provide that demonstrates a behavior of this level of responsiveness?*

3. Universal vs. Cultural Correlation (Lecture)

Present the Universal vs. Cultural Correlation for Death, Life, Pain & Hunger

Time: 5 minutes

Materials: None

Lecture Content - Use the points below to frame your lecture

- Now that we have a full understanding of the typical 4 levels of Cultural Awareness and have internalized their meaning by using some real-life examples, let's talk about some areas that may lead to potential miscommunication due to their universal vs. cultural correlation.

- Take Pain for example: Pain is an unpleasant sensation associated with damage to our body. Pain is a universal feeling in that, unless for some exceptional physiological circumstance, everyone experiences it. However, the ways in which people conceptualize and treat pain are varied. How people express and behaviorally respond to pain is individual and may be cultural. Some people are very stoic; others are very expressive. Others may have more of a physical reaction than others, as in heart rate and blood pressure, for example.

- Hunger is another example. There are many definitions given to the word "hunger." But, in general we will say that hunger is feeling of discomfort, weakness, or need caused by lack of food, coupled with the desire to eat. It is once again universal in that we all experience it regardless of age, gender and ethnicity. Nonetheless, what we choose to eat to satisfy hunger is very linked to individual & cultural values. Some diets have rice as a regular part of the meal; others will have a form of bread (leavened of flat); others may use some other form or no form of starchy food to accompany every meal.

- Two very challenging topics that have a universal vs. cultural correlation are Life and Death. Both are very universal in that all of us are born and experience life, and likewise all of us eventually experience the end of our lifecycle and die.

- How we interpret life or death is extremely complex and can lead us into having a very long discussion. For the purpose of our lesson, we will just say that the meaning of life and death is deeply intertwined with the philosophical and religious ideas of existence, social ties, consciousness, and happiness, as well as

deals with many other issues, such as symbolic meaning, ontology, value, purpose, ethics, good and evil, free will, conceptions of God, the existence of God, the soul, and the afterlife.

4. **Other examples of areas with Universal vs. Cultural Correlations (Pair Sharing)**
   Student will work with a partner to provide additional examples of areas with Universal vs. Cultural correlations and will report back to class.

Time: 3-5minutes

Materials: Pen and Paper to write on

Preparation: Ask student to choose a partner to work for this activity

- Direction to students:
  "Please work with a partner for the next 3 to 5 minutes and try to find one more area or topic that has a universal vs. cultural correlation and bring an example of how this may have a different interpretation from one culture to another."

Allow student pairs 3 to a maximum of 5 minutes to complete the activity. Depending on their progress, they may need extra time.

5. **Reporting on additional areas with Universal vs. Cultural Correlations (Whole Class Discussion)**
   Students report results from previous activity and provide personal reactions/feedback

Time: 5 minutes

Materials: None

Facilitate a class discussion by asking 2 or 3 volunteering pairs to share results from Activity #4 with the whole group. You may ask groups to report their identified area where a universal vs. cultural exists and give examples for the two cultural interpretations.

Ask for class to provide additional examples or feedback to group presentations. Here is a suggested quote that you can use to help you initiate a conversation:

"Thanks you for this wonderful example, Mary and John on the concept of Death. Can anybody else think of another cultural interpretation of death in addition to the example that Mary and John just presented?" or "Does anyone have additional thoughts on what Mary and John just presented?"

6. Final Thoughts (Lecture)

Time: 2 minutes

Materials: None

Conclude the session by re-capping some of the cultural aspects already discussed and brought forth by students as a way to give a closing statement that encapsulates the following points:

- The state of Culturally Responsiveness, whether in healthcare or in general, requires awareness first. The 4 levels of awareness have shown a normal pathway that people often go through as they enter an area of knowledge that is new to them. Because everyone comes with their own cultural bias, and we all have them even when we deny it, a transition from a state of closed-mindedness to open-mindedness is not always easy to do. In fact, not everyone is open to transition into a state of open-mindedness as some people have a real difficult time trying to understand and acknowledge that there are world-views out there that may differ while being equally legit.The best way to understand the cultural values of a person is by asking questions that allow us to acquire more knowledge and a better understanding of that person.

- The key here is acceptance of diversity, not necessarily agreement. We all share things that are universal, like pain and hunger, but the fact the we have different ways of expressing and manifesting these does not make us more right or wrong; just simply different. Having awareness of this is the first step toward becoming a Cultural Responsive person.