Complexities of Culture in Divorce and Separation
AFC

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Objectives and Scope

- Challenges of being culturally sensitive
- Layered model of examining culture
- Influence of culture on divorce and separation
- Influence of culture on parenting after divorce
- Clinical implications

Justice Sotomayor

"Whether born from experience or inherent physiological or cultural differences our gender and national origins may and will make a difference in our judging."
Being Culturally Aware, Sensitive and Competent Requires..
(Sue & Sue, 2008)

- Increasing one's self awareness (assumptions, values & biases)
- Understanding the worldview of the cultural "other"
- Developing appropriate intervention Skills

Updated Multicultural guidelines-
Adapted by the APA Council of Representative in August 2017

- An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity and Intersectionality, 2017
- Includes practice, research, consultation, and education.
- Including not only the recipient of clinical services, but also student, research participant or consultee.
- Advocates for a more diverse & inclusive population of psychologists.

Dearth of good research
- Hard to study
  - Culture bound methodology
    - Difficult to generalize
Why we act differently in race related situations

- Implicit Bias -- the automatic associations and attitudes linked to race and ethnicity;
- Racial Anxiety -- the fear that you will be judged because of your race and if you are white that you will be assumed to be racist; and
- Stereotype Threat -- the worry that you will conform to negative stereotypes about your group.

Haas Repor, 2014

Implications for practice

- All of us have inherited biases. Acknowledging these to ourselves can minimize the detrimental effects on others.
- Socialize, work with and get to know people from diverse backgrounds on personal and intimate levels. You can only understand about sexism by talking to women, about homophobia by talking to a gay or lesbian person.
- Explore yourself as a cultural being. How have you experienced discrimination or privilege.

What is culture?
Broadening our conceptualization of Culture

Consider contextual factors and Intersectionality

The ADDRESSING Framework by Hays (2008)

- Age and generational differences
- Developmental Disabilities
- Disabilities acquired later in life
- Religion and spiritual orientation
- Ethnic and racial identity
- Socioeconomic status
- Sexual orientation
- Indigenous heritage
- National origin
- Gender

- Religious/Spiritual identity
- Economic class background
- Sexual identity
- Psychological maturity
- Ethnic racial identity
- Chronological/Developmental challenges
- Trauma and other threats to well being
- Family background and history
- Unique physical characteristics
- Location of residence and language differences
Similarities and Difference

Resonance and Dissonance

Acculturation
(Berry, 2003)

Assimilation
Separation
Integration
Marginalization

Stages of Cultural Identity
(Sue & Sue, 2008)

- Conformity
- Dissonance and appreciating
- Resistance and immersion
- Introspection
- Integrative Awareness
Implications for practice

- Each family member/generation may experience a different world based on their cognitive and social experiences.
- A cultural match may be helpful for someone in the stages of dissonance or resistance.
- Validate the realities faced by the individual rather than provide the glass half full version.
- Explore various aspects of identity besides the racial/sexual orientation etc.

Locus of Control and Locus of Responsibility

World View Differences

- Locus of control
  - Internal (we shape our own life)
  - External (things happen by chance and luck)

- Locus of responsibility
  - Internal (acceptance of blame for one’s failures)
  - External (blame is placed on society and systems)
World View Differences

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>IC-IR</th>
<th>IC-ER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am OK and I have control over myself.</td>
<td>I am OK, but I need a chance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Society is OK, and I can make it in the system.</td>
<td>Society is not OK, but I know what's wrong and I seek to change it.</td>
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<th>EC-IR</th>
<th>EC-ER</th>
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<tr>
<td>I am OK, but I have to define myself according to the dominant culture.</td>
<td>I am not OK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society is OK, the way it is, it's up to me.</td>
<td>Society is not OK, and the system is to blame.</td>
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Clinical Implications

- Assess the person’s decision making style and cultural expectations.
- Examine the socio political climate of power and control.
- Validate the realities faced by some while empower and advocate when possible.

Implications for practice

- Explore how different members of the family feel about their situation.
- Normalize differences when they exist.
- Validate the traditions and roles expectations.
All couples are intercultural

Marriage requires a realignment of individual realities into a conjoint marital reality and requires a negotiating of divergent cultural values.

Transformative Opportunities for children

- Cultural belonging
- Cultural literacy and adaptability
- Cultural empathy
Clinical Implications

- Facilitate cultural awareness
- Do not rely entirely on your clients to educate you about their culture
- Enhance cultural communication
- Cultural translation
- Cultural Mediation

Cultural Dissonance: Cross cultural challenges

- Communication
- Child rearing
- Discrimination and racial stratification
- Preference for endogamy
- Discrepant family systems

Parenting

- Independence vs. Interdependence
- Divergent roles and expectations of extended family members
- Styles of communication with the children
- Varied levels of emotional involvement with children
- Distal versus proximal styles of mother-child interaction and parent-child relations in general
- The symbolic meaning of the child in providing the continuity of cultural values and rituals

References

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