CULTURE, ETHNICITY, RACE & HISTORICAL TRAUMA: WHAT CAN WE DO?

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Discussion Points

What are we talking about? Culture, Race, or Ethnicity?

Why aren’t we talking about Historical Trauma?

A Relationship-based Framework of Acceptance, Respect, Kindness & Dignity

• Legacies of Historical Trauma: Privilege, Implicit Bias, Internalized Stereotypes

What can I do? Embrace your Ethnicity!

• Evidence - Interpersonal EcoMap of Connection
• Dyad Share - The Johari Window
Distinct Constructs:
Culture – Ethnicity – Race

**Culture** - A family legacy includes history of group with other groups

**Ethnicity** - Based on individual’s subjective identification with a specific cultural or ethnic group.

**Race** – Sociopolitical term externally imposed.

- Intersectionality – Inter-related oppressions

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Culture- A Family legacy

**Social norms** – shared rules that specify appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

**Mores** – the norms that people consider vital to their well-being and to their most cherished values.

**Sanctions** – the socially imposed rewards and punishments that compel people to comply with norms.

Shreveport, LA: June 27, 2008
Ethnicity- Individual choice

• A developmental characteristic
• A social identity based on the culture of ones ancestors national or tribal groups.
• Based on individual’s subjective identification with a specific cultural or ethnic group.
• Maintained because it “feels good.”

Race – Externally Imposed

• A social-political concept used to place individual into categories based on their phenotypic or religious characteristics (such as Blacks or Whites or Jews.
• Biologically an isolated, inbreeding population in a distinctive genetic heritage
• A political legacy and determinant of concept of “minority status” and invoked for considerations of social policy.
Race-Culture-Ethnicity = Strong Emotions!

Emotions associated with Ethnicity & Race

- Pride, Shame, Guilt, Terrorism
- Genocide, Ethnic cleansing
- Largest determinant of hate crimes is racial bias.
- 62% of reported the crimes done with African Americans
  -- American Psychological Association (1998)

Historical Trauma

- A massive group trauma that manifests itself psychologically and impacts members of the targeted group across generations.
- May be a sustained or chronic trauma that occurs over generations of a targeted group and becomes a necessary part of their everyday lives. Thus children of this group are socialized to expect and how to live with the Trauma. E.g., the Holocaust, U.S. Slavery, Indian Boarding Schools.
Legacies of Historical Trauma in Child Welfare Decisions

How does the racial context influence impact the perception and assessment of parent-child relations in Families of Color? E.g. the perception of Native, American, Black, Latino families;

A child welfare system truth’

Interdisciplinary ‘helpers’ at every point along the child welfare continuum, may operate from stereotypes about Blacks, Native Americans, Latinos & Asians & different identity groups.

How do stereotypes contribute to Racial Disparities in foster care?
Stereotypes contribute to racial disparities

Conditions that diminish cognitive capacity – time pressure, fatigue, and information overload – are associated with the use of stereotyping by even well-intentioned health care providers.


How stereotypes contribute to Racial Disparities in foster care

“Helpers” are generally expected, and expect themselves, to view each client objectively and impartially, collect accurate and detailed information on patients’ unique clinical and social history, and to combine the with findings from the physical exam and test results in order to make a recommendation.
OUTCOMES AND ISSUES

- DECISION MAKING
- WORKER/SYSTEM BIAS
- FIT BETWEEN RESOURCES AND NEEDS
- PLACEMENT AS THE PRIMARY RESPONSE
- LIMITED ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMMUNITIES
- LIMITED PARTNERSHIP WITH COMMUNITIES
- POLICY CONSTRAINTS
- LACK OF REAL LEGAL REPRESENTATION

Michigan: March 23, 2006

Emotional Memory

The intergenerational mechanism of historical trauma

Socialization into Group Social Identities of Race-Culture-Ethnicity = Strong Emotions! Fear, Threat, Pride, shame, guilt, terrorism

New Paradigm: Internal Working of Relationships

www.diversitycreates.com
The Developing Partnership of Parent-Infant Attachment (J. Bowlby, M. S. Ainsworth)

Infant Sends Cues

Infant Feels: secure and forms attachment relationship with caregiver

Caregiver Responds: promptly and appropriately with warmth

Concept: Internal Working Model

The infant’s expectations about caregiver’s availability through everyday interactions—> an Internal Working Model of self (“Am I worthy?” “Am I valued? Am I heard?” and other ‘looking glass’ effect).
IWM in Secure Attachment

Expectation of Others:

- “I feel accepted”
- “My needs are met”
- “I am loved, I am connected”

IWM – Insecure Attachment

Expectation of Others:

- I’m not sure - Ambivalence
- I know for sure – Avoidance
- I have no idea - Disorganized
Court Team Interpersonal Relationships

Goal: Positive Perception of the Quality of Working Relationships

- Evidence of Connection
- Evidence of Change
- Evidence of Success

The Developing Partnerships of Court Team

Individual sends Cues

Receiver Feels: respected & dignity intact - forms healthy working relationships

Receiver Responds: focused on infant & child centered strengths, and appropriately with warmth & honest
Court Team members: Internal Working Models

The individual’s expectations (emotional history of identity group trauma) about receiver -> an Internal Working Model of self (“Am I worthy?” “Am I valued? Am I heard?” and perception of other (‘looking glass’ effect).

IWM – Emotional group memory, Unrecognized History

Disconnected Expectation of Others:

- I’m not sure - Ambivalence
- I know for sure – Avoidance
- I have no idea - Disorganized
Evidence of Perception

- Our family did not own slaves!
- ‘I am not a Racist’
- ‘I don’t see colors’
- ‘I’m a member of the human race’
- Why are we still talking about race? We have a Black president! What more do they want? Why can’t they just get over it!

1. EcoMap of the Quality of Key Relationships

(Ann Hartmann)

Instructions: Name & Today’s date at top Circle in center for you

Draw Circles - 6+ KEY groups of people in YOUR LIFE: children, spouse/partner, extended family, Birth parents, same gender/different gender friends.

A. Strength of connection:
   Positive & strong = Double or single solid black
   Weak = ----- 
   Blank = [NO CONNECTION]

B. Quality of the connection:

Green: Strong Positive   Red slash marks: conflict
Relationship-Based Court-Team Model

The Model – a 3 step-process for goals in a relationships:

Language – Frames your perceptions of the quality relationships (e.g., ‘celebrate diversity’ ‘diversity creates’ ‘embrace ethnicity’). Language is the basis of culture which gives meaning to reality. New vocabulary of dignity, kindness, respect & regulated emotions!

Metaphor – A Proverb that describes the strengths of the relationship. The brain hears the underlying truth of the quality of the connection of the relationship

Provides the means to set goals to re-story the relationship, embrace Your Ethnicity and Diversity


Transformation from Shared Trauma

Enslaved Africans European Owners

This Lil’ Lite o’ mine Amazing Grace
Sankofa - Inspirational Symbol

Ghana – Akan language – ‘reach back and get it.’ The bird with its head turned backwards taking an egg off its back. The ‘Egg’ of PATH are interrupting the negative messages to children of Colorism – valuing one skin color or hair texture over the other.