



Welcome

*Cultural Issues
in
Foster Care*

*Dealing with the
Dynamics of Difference*


1



**Complete the sentences on
posters with the provided
markers...**

2

**People Scavenger
Hunt!**



- Use Handout #2, and find someone in the room who "fits" each of these statements.
- Write that person's name in the box.
- Who has the most "complete" boxes?

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In your groups, share...



- Name
- Number of years fostering
- How would you describe yourself culturally?

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Agenda

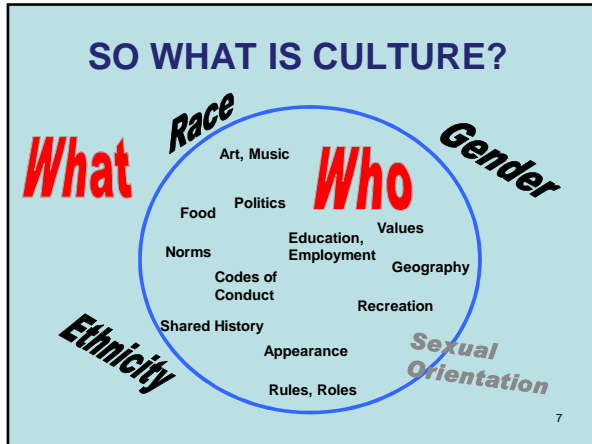
- Introductions/Setting the Stage
- Let's Define Culture
- Values and Codes of Conduct
- Misconceptions
- Errors in Assessing Culture
- Identity Development
- Strategies for Caregivers
- Wrap-Up and Transfer of Learning

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Competencies and Learning Objectives

- Knows what culture is and can recognize its influence on behavior
- Understands how differences in cultural beliefs and standards of behavior can lead to misconceptions about others
- Knows how to honor the child's cultural values, norms, and practices in the caregiving home
- Understands the rights of parents whose children are in placement, and knows how to respect those rights
- Can model management of cultural differences with the child through open discussion and celebration of each other's culture

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Culture is a system of values, beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and standards of behavior that governs the organization of people into social groups and regulates both group and individual behaviors.



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Values

Strongly held beliefs about what life and people should be like, what is "good" and "bad" in life, and what is "right" and "wrong."

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Codes of Conduct



A code of rules and standards of conduct encouraging behavior that is consistent with a culture's values.

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In your groups...



- Consider your scenario.
- Discuss the following questions:

1. Is there a cultural issue here, or is this simply misbehavior?
2. How would you feel if you landed in a family where this was the norm?
3. Imagine a child with this code of conduct enters your home. How would you handle it?
4. How does this awareness impact the way you relate to foster children and their birth families?

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Residual Rights of Primary Parents

- Reasonable visitation
- Responsibility for support
- Privilege to determine the child's religious affiliation



Ohio Revised Code 2151.011

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Avoid liability due to residual rights of parents regarding religion...

- Meet with birth parents and worker to discuss religious practices of birth family
- Write a note outlining religious practices of birth family
- If birth parents agree to allow child to attend services with foster family, include this permission in note (birth parents sign)
- Agency provides respite if birth parents do not give permission for child to attend services with foster family
- Foster parents respect cultural practices based on religious beliefs or traditions (diet, clothing, etc.)

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Misunderstandings in Communication



- Eye contact
- Social distance and touching
- Informality and formality

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Misunderstanding—

We see something that conflicts with our codes of conduct, but we ask about the behavior and learn about the values reflected by that unfamiliar code of conduct.





Judging—

We see a behavior reflecting an unfamiliar code of conduct. We ask about the behavior, but we answer the question ourselves.

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Errors in Assessing Culture

A continuum of errors... 




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Identity gives us a sense of stability in the world and within ourselves.




It has unlimited variations.

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IDENTITY: Qualities that distinguish one person from another 



Inwardly: How we think and feel 

Outwardly : How we behave and how others view us

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Definition of Identity

👁️👁️ Values & beliefs

Ethnic/Cultural Heritage	Knowledge and Skills	Personal and Family History
Hopes and Dreams	Talents and Abilities	Likes and Dislikes
Fears	Ways of Expressing Emotion	
Physical Characteristics/- Appearance	Memories	Sexuality

👁️👁️

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Persons of Difference

- People who are differently abled
- Different religious orientations
- Urban/Rural
- Different geographic regions
- Different languages
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning
- Others?

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Develop culturally relevant strategies for caregivers...

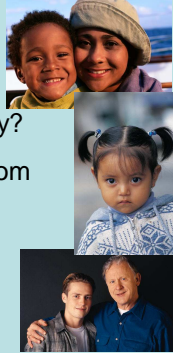
- For hair and skin care
- For handling holidays
- For dealing with diet and food issues
- For developing understanding of history and pride in identity with a group
- For dealing with appearance and music



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Cultural competence is a journey

- Where are you on the journey?
- What are you taking home from the workshop?
- Is there something you are leaving behind at the workshop?



AGENDA

- I)** Introductions and Setting the Stage
- II)** Let's Define Culture
- III)** Values and Codes of Conduct: Concerns for Caregivers
- IV)** Misconceptions
- V)** Errors in Assessing Culture
- VI)** Identity Development
- VII)** Strategies for Caregivers
- VIII)** Wrap-Up and Transfer of Learning

COMPETENCIES

927-01-001	Knows what culture is and how it is different from race and ethnicity
927-01-002	Understands the importance of cultural values, norms, and practices
927-01-003	Understands families may have different values and standards of behavior; or families may share values but have different standards of behavior
927-01-004	Understands how differences in cultural beliefs and standards of behavior can lead to misconceptions about others
927-01-005	Can recognize and respect the impact of culture on behavior
927-02-001	Knows how a different cultural viewpoint can affect relationships with foster or adopted children and their families
927-02-002	Knows ways their own cultural beliefs, values, and standards of behavior may differ from the child's
927-02-003	Knows why it is important to include the child's cultural background in caregiver family practices and celebrations
927-02-004	Knows how to honor the child's cultural values, norms, and practices in the caregiving home
927-02-005	Can use knowledge about the child's culture to help guide the child's development, promote positive self-esteem, and help the child adjust in the caregiving/adoptive home and community
927-03-001	Understands how a foster, kinship or adoptive child may experience problems in the school or community related to

Resource Handout #1

	cultural differences
927-03-002	Knows how to help children who encounter prejudice related to their culture, race, or other differences
928-02-001	Understands the rights of parents whose children are in placement, and knows how to respect those rights
927-03-003	Can model management of cultural differences with the child through open discussion and celebration of each other's culture

CULTURAL SCAVENGER HUNT

Who can explain what Hispanic means?	Who has attended a pow-wow?	Who has traveled to 6 or more countries?	Who plays a musical instrument?	Who has hosted or recently met someone from another country?
Who is a first, second, or third generation American?	Who has lived on a reservation?	Can name 4 non-American leaders who have worked for world peace?	Who has participated in a Kwanza Celebration?	Who speaks and understands two or more languages?
Who has eaten 3 or more different Asian foods (e.g. Thai, Korean, Vietnamese, Hmong)?	Who knows the definition of a feminist?	<u>DIVERSITY</u> <u>BINGO</u> YOUR NAME GOES HERE!	Who has attended a quinceañera?	Who comes from a family of five or more children?
Who can recite a Maya Angelou poem?	Who knows when National Coming Out Day is and what it is about?	Who has a hidden disability?	Knows 2 core differences between Jewish and Christian beliefs.	Who has participated in a Seder Celebration?
Who has a family member who has a disability?	Who knows what ageism is?	Who has a great sense of humor?	Who has seen the movie <i>Boys Don't Cry</i> ?	Knows what language is spoken by most people worldwide

Parents' Residual Rights

Foster parents are required to respect the religious practices and beliefs of the birth parents, even though the child is in the temporary custody of the child-placing agency. If the foster parents take a foster child to their church, without the consent of the birth parents, the foster parents and the agency may violate the right of the birth parents to choose the religious beliefs of the child.

To avoid liability, and to respect the rights of the birth parents, foster parents should do the following:

- Have a meeting with the birth parents and the caseworker to discuss the religious practices of the birth family;
- Write a note, signed by all in attendance, outlining what the religious practices of the birth parents are;
- If the birth parents agree that the foster parents can take the child to the foster parents' place of worship, make sure that the note includes that permission;
- If the birth parents do not give permission for the child to attend the foster parents' place of worship, the note should include a statement that the agency will provide relief care for the child so that the foster parents may practice their own religion;
- If the birth parents have cultural practices that may be based on religious beliefs, such as the avoidance of certain foods or the wearing of traditional clothing, the note should indicate that the foster parents will respect these cultural practices.

If major issues are not resolved at the meeting, the foster parent and caseworker should meet with the agency attorney for guidance.

DIFFERENTIATING STEREOTYPING FROM CULTURALLY RELEVANT INFORMATION

Stereotypes are generalized *statements about the presumed characteristics of a particular group of people and its members.*

The greatest danger of negative stereotypes is that they have the *potential to communicate misinformation* and promote misjudgments about cultural groups and their individual members.

Stereotypes that communicate negative information can *promote mistrust and fear.* People have strong emotional reactions to persons whom they believe to be threatening, as when a Black person in confrontation with a White person assumes she is racist; or, when a White person assumes the Black person walking toward him on the street is likely to assault him.

If a stereotype describes a trait that is normally thought to be positive, it is *less likely to be recognized as a stereotype.* For example, a statement that "Asian people are very polite and respectful of other people" could be viewed as both an accurate description of many Asian persons, and recognition of an attribute. However, the statement still *has the potential to misinform, and therefore, can be harmful.*

The fallacy of stereotyping is a common fallacy of logic; *we draw conclusions where no conclusions are warranted.* As a result, we can be sure that our stereotypes will often be wrong.

Stereotypes are generated in several ways. At times they *may be an accurate description of traits* that are present in a majority of members of a cultural group. A stereotype such as "Religion is important to people of Hispanic descent" accurately reflects a trait that is common to many members of this cultural group. However, we cannot assume that all persons of Hispanic origin are religious! When we automatically attribute the trait to any individual member of the culture, we do that person a disservice by forming conclusions about him before we know him!

Other *stereotypes may be derived from misinformation* about a culture. Some stereotypes develop because members of a group who exhibit certain characteristics achieve a high degree of visibility, and they are assumed to be representative of the group as a whole. For example, media publicity about adolescent street gangs in Black neighborhoods might perpetuate a stereotype of Black youth as routinely involved in gangs and prone to violent, aggressive behavior.

For child welfare professionals to be culturally competent, they must have accurate information about the various cultural groups they serve. However, if we use culturally relevant information inappropriately, we may inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes, even though our intent is to be culturally competent.

To differentiate culturally relevant information from stereotypes, one must consider the following:

- 1) Many "stereotypes" reflect negative characteristics of a group. There is obvious harm in negative stereotypes. However, all cultures have attributes that are not adaptive, and some negative descriptors may be accurate.
- 2) Many "culturally relevant" statements reflect positive attributes. However, even if they are "positive" in nature, they may still be stereotypes; that is, a description of a trait of a group of people, that may or may not be accurate.
- 3) Any statement, be it positive or negative, can be an accurate description of a trait that is present in the group, if it was derived from a representative sample and is accurate in its description.
- 4) Any statement, be it positive or negative in nature, can be an inaccurate description of the characteristic traits of a group, if the statement is based on too small a sample, or is a conclusion drawn from an inaccurate representation of a group (such as by the news media, etc.)

Resource Handout #4

- 5) Any accurate, culturally relevant trait can be a stereotype, *if it is applied to any individual without first assessing the individual*. Drawing conclusions about any individual based upon a generalized statement about group members is stereotyping.

For information to be "culturally relevant," the following must be true:

- 1) The culturally descriptive statement, be it "positive" or "negative" in nature, must be derived from an **accurate** assessment of the group's norms, traits, or behaviors; (all cultures have attributes that are positive, and similarly, many that are negative.)
- 2) A culturally relevant trait cannot be applied to any individual member of the cultural group without first assessing whether, and how, it fits. We must always "check it out"; we can never presume it to be true.
- 3) Any member of a cultural group may exhibit a typical cultural trait, but to varying degrees. Individual personality differences, cultural assimilation, generational differences, and variations in historical and family background can modify any cultural trait.

To be culturally competent, workers must achieve a balance between understanding the common, shared cultural characteristics of a particular cultural group, yet must be careful not to inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes.

DEFINITION OF CULTURE

The first consideration in any discussion of culture is to define it and differentiate it from other related terms such as race, nationality, and ethnicity. While these terms are often used interchangeably, they have very different meanings.

Race refers to an anthropological system of classification based upon physical characteristics determined by heredity. People who share a genetic heritage and who, as a result, have very similar physical characteristics constitute a racial group. Racial characteristics include color and texture of hair, color of skin and eyes, stature, bodily proportions and bone structure.

Currently, many anthropologists and ethnologists are questioning the fundamental validity and utility of racial classification, particularly in a world where there has been so much intermarriage between people of what were originally different races.

Ethnicity generally refers to a classification of people based upon their national or regional origin, such as "Nigerian," "Serbo-Croatian", or "Chinese." The word "ethnic" is derived from a Greek word that means "national" or "foreign."

In the centuries prior to easy air and land travel, most people were born, married, had their children, and died within a relatively limited geographic area. As a result, the members of an ethnic group were usually of the same race and they often shared a common historical and cultural background.

However, ethnicity and culture are not interchangeable. People from the same ethnic group differ widely in their cultural traits, especially in today's world with relatively easy and widespread immigration and relocation, and conversely, there are often cultural similarities among people from different ethnic groups.

Culture is more complex than either ethnicity or race. Culture refers to the total system of values, beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and standards of behavior that

regulate life within a particular group of people. Culture includes components that organize people into social groups and that regulate both individual and group behavior.

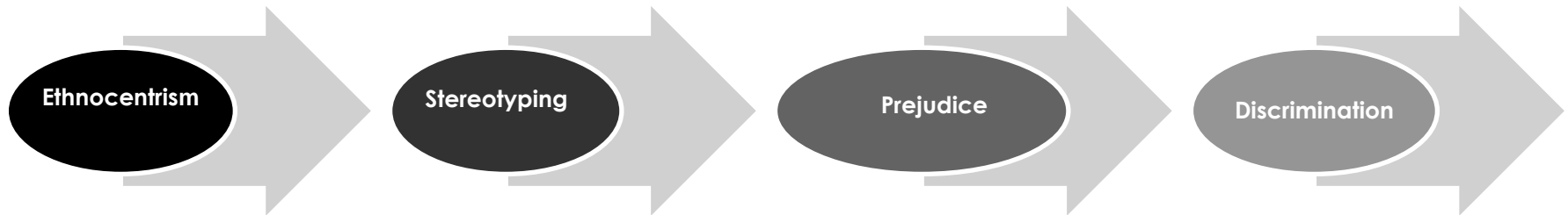
Culture includes cognitive systems such as beliefs, attitudes, and values. It includes norms, which are rules regarding appropriate ways of behaving, and provides definition of roles, which are the appropriate and expected behaviors of certain people based upon their gender, social position, or area of responsibility in the society. It includes spiritual or religious systems and institutions. It includes language, which is the principle tool for communication among group members. Culture also includes the products of life, including the art and artifacts produced by the group. While race is determined by one's biology, and ethnicity by one's national or regional origin, culture is "made by humans." Cultural components are created by individuals and incorporated into group life to regulate social organization and to assure the survival and well-being of group members.

What is true is that culture, in contrast to race, gender, or ethnicity, is *transmitted through learning*. It is important to emphasize this point, since so much of cultural behavior, once learned, appears to be so "natural" that it can easily be perceived as "instinctive" or biologically determined. In fact, many people remain unaware that their beliefs and actions are, in fact, largely components of their culture--that is, learned over a lifetime.

Once we are conditioned by culture to meet our needs in particular ways, we tend to become so set in these ways that change is perceived as a threat to personal and interpersonal stability and continuity. However, the capacity to change is essential for ongoing adaptation and optimal adjustment to a changing environment. In short, while cultural traditions sustain us, we must be open to learning new ways and integrating change into our lives in order to survive in our changing world.

Errors in Assessing Culture

A continuum of errors...



- **Ethnocentrism**—the belief that one’s own culture is superior to all others; an unwillingness to consider alternative ways to live
- **Stereotyping**—generalized assumptions about presumed characteristics of a cultural group and its members; assumptions that all members of a particular group are the same; often promote misinformation
- **Prejudice**—drawing conclusions without any data or information that would support such conclusions; typically unfounded judgments, beliefs, and attitudes
- **Discrimination**—the act or behavior that is generated by prejudice; treating people differently based on prejudice; often grants privilege to members of a majority group and denies privilege to members of a minority group

DEVELOPMENT OF RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY

Identity Development in Non-Minority Individuals

No Social Consciousness	Spontaneous, natural behavior triggered by the pressures to conform to particular social norms and behaviors. Individual is unaware of his/her expected social role.
Acceptance	Individual identifies with role models and imitates the modeling of behavior. Individual conforms to social expectations of appropriate behavior as a member of his/her group. Behaviors, attitudes, and values that do not fit into group's code of conduct are rejected and devalued.
Resistance	Individual begins to question previously held beliefs. Feelings of discomfort and anger emerge. Individual begins to reject the group's pressure to conform. A new perspective about his/her group is formed.
Redefinition	Individual becomes introspective about group's values and codes of conduct. Renewed interest in racial/ethnic heritage. Sense of pride in one's racial/ethnic group membership.
Internalization	Individual is able to integrate insights. Individual is more flexible, open-minded, and somewhat autonomous. Individual recognizes extent of his/her journey and empathizes with those at earlier stages.

Identity Development in Persons of Difference

Pre-Encounter	Individual lacks interest in race concept and fails to see it as relevant. May have preference for dominant cultural values or codes of conduct, yet he/she may feel inferior or anxious.
Encounter	Individual examines and questions previously held dominant culture attitudes and beliefs. Stage can be triggered by a single overt encounter or an accumulation of subtle experiences. Individual may experience confusion about his/her own group as well as other groups.
Awakening/Immersion	Individual has searched for his/her own identity and is committing to his/her roots. Likely to endorse values and codes of conduct of his/her own group and reject those of other groups.
Internalization	Reassessment of racial/ethnic identity from which a more balanced, integrated identity emerges. Individual internalizes a positive, secure identity, permitting him/her to appreciate other racial/ethnic groups.

COMPONENTS OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Cultural competence encompasses several components:

- The ability to recognize the effects of our own culture on our values, beliefs, thoughts, communications, and actions;
- The ability to recognize how our own "cultural lens" affects our world view and can distort our interpretation of other cultures;
- The ability to learn about another culture from the people who know it best--the members of that cultural group--and the willingness to be open to cultural change;
- Understanding that achieving cultural competence requires that we become "life-long learners"; we can never become complacent that we fully understand culture;
- Understanding that culture is, itself, dynamic and continually changing, permitting continued successful adaptation to changing life circumstances;
- Recognizing how cultural differences may affect perception, communication, and our ability to interact with people whose cultural backgrounds are different from our own;
- Understanding how cultural "blindness" and bias contribute to racism, prejudice, and discrimination;
- The ability to transcend cultural differences to establish trusting and meaningful relationships with persons from other cultures;
- The ability to integrate cultural concepts appropriately into child welfare casework to enhance and strengthen families within their own cultural contexts; and to provide families with opportunities to grow and develop in ways that might promote a better adaptation to their situations and environments.

PARENTING STRATEGIES

Hair and Skin Care

Holidays

PARENTING STRATEGIES

Diet and Food Issues

Understanding History and Pride in Identity

Appearance/Music
