

ISSUE 36, JUNE 2007

Diversity Among Us

OCWTP MARCH 2007 TRAINER EVENT - Leslie Ahmadi



This year's OCWTP Trainer Event was an opportunity for trainers to look at the call to cultural competence with new eyes—not so much as a mandate to understand and train on other cultures as an invitation for each of us to participate in a journey - a journey to see the multifaceted nature of each person's cultural identity and a journey to define, describe, share and declare who we are, whose we are, where we are from, what we believe, how we view the world and how we present ourselves to the world.

Cultural competence is an ongoing journey that calls us to heed the warning implied by the French philosopher Anais Nin's humorous statement: "We don't see things as they are; we see things as WE are." It's about looking at events and influences in our individual lives, family lives, and communities for clues as to where our 'cultural lens' was crafted and how we might fit into cultural patterns—without allowing ourselves or others to box us into stereotypes. It's about the fact that, at its core, a person's culture is about those values that have most shaped his/her beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and the codes of behavior he/she lives by—consciously and unconsciously.

To facilitate this journey, activities at this year's trainer event were specifically designed to celebrate diversities along with commonalities, to acknowledge the powerful role that culture plays in each of our lives, and to articulate some of the challenges and opportunities associated with a system choosing the road toward cultural competence.

As an early morning welcome activity, trainers were directed to place a pin on a spot on the map where they considered themselves to be from. Many people later commented that the activity created a dilemma for them at the point of being asked to choose just one place (!)

Trainers also participated in a table activity that encouraged them to discover the multiple points of reference and common threads with which we can relate to each other's worlds.

The trainer event keynote entitled, *Disproportionality in Child Welfare*, by Dr. Ruth McRoy, addressed the disproportionate presence of children of color in the U.S. child welfare system and ways in which the training system can address the

issue. The PowerPoint presentation by Dr. Ruth McRoy on Disproportionality, can be found at: <http://www.ocwtp.com/For%20Trainers/Trainer%20Event%20Keynote%202007.pdf>

Workshops this year focused on the role of cultural competence in child welfare training. Topics included:

- *Making MEPA Work* (Dr. McRoy): A discussion on practicing cultural competence in placement considerations while staying within the parameters of MEPA-IEPA laws.
- *Ethics and Cultural Awareness* (Dan Houston): A review of the Ohio Code of Ethics from the perspective of values, norms and expectations that can vary widely across cultures; the issues and dilemmas that can result in child welfare cases; and ethical considerations for addressing them.
- *Training in a Diverse Environment* (CeCe Norwood and Charlotte Osterman): A workshop that offered strategies for removing cultural bias in training, creating a "safe" learning environment, and enabling trainers to enhance learning for all participants by capitalizing on the opportunities diversity provides in the training room.
- *Avoiding Cultural Faux Pas in Your Training* (Beth Ann Rodríguez): A workshop that provided tips on what trainers might do when something said or done in the training room is culturally offensive to someone present—and how to avoid (or at least reduce) the possibility of such a thing occurring in the first place.
- *When Values Collide* (Phil Hart): A workshop that offered guidelines on how trainers might respond in the training room when differences in values surface, challenging long-held values of others—perhaps even those of the trainer.
- *Training with the Immigrant and Refugee in Mind* (Leslie Ahmadi and Gloria Rodríguez-Milord): A presentation featuring an expert panel of immigrant/refugee service providers who clarified the different categories of immigration status and their impact on

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Cultural Competence Task Force:

In 2006, the Institute for Human Services created a Cultural Competence Task Force to address the cultural issues that impact the OCWTP and the child welfare system. Since its inception, this task force has been involved in several initiatives. In addition to helping plan the recent Trainer Event, task force members completed a major review and edit of OCWTP's Caseworker Core modules to strengthen the integration of cultural issues. They also made recommendations for revisions to the OCWTP New Trainer Handbook and OCWTP Trainer Policies as they pertain to cultural diversity and competence. A major initiative of the task force involved creating demographic maps for Ohio's eight Regional Training Centers. The maps provide each region with a better understanding of racial, ethnic, religious, and immigrant diversity in their catchment area. This information will be used to develop training that addresses the specific needs of diverse populations, and will be integrated into all OCWTP training.

Another initiative set into motion by the task force is a survey of the OCWTP trainer pool. One part of the survey assessed the cultural makeup of OCWTP's trainers. Using an anonymous online forum, trainers were asked to culturally identify themselves using their own descriptions. The OCWTP is committed to having a culturally diverse training pool to maximize the diversity of perspectives in training, regardless of content, and this survey was one more way for the OCWTP to reach this commitment. The second part of the survey asked trainers to identify those cultural groups on which they have specific knowledge and expertise and those cultural groups for whom they need more knowledge. This will help the OCWTP identify trainers who can train on specific cultural groups who live in Ohio, as well as help the OCWTP develop trainings and resources to help increase the cultural competence of its trainers.

Culture and Diversity Resources

The Cultural Competence Task Force recommends the following resources for additional information on cultural diversity and competence:

- Bucher, Richard D. (2004). *Diversity Consciousness: Opening Our Minds to People, Cultures, and Opportunities*. Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Child Welfare*, Vol. LXXXIV, September/October 2005, Special Issue: Immigrants and Refugees in Child Welfare, edited by Ilze Earner and Hilda Rivera.
- Child Welfare*, Vol. LXXXV, March/April 2006, Special Issue: LGBTQ Youth in Child Welfare, edited by Rob Woronoff and Gerald P. Mallon.
- Casey Family Programs, *Knowing Who You Are...Helping Youth in Care Develop Their Racial and Ethnic Identity* (video and e-learning opportunity). <http://www.casey.org/Resources/Projects/REI/default.htm>
- Lisa A. Fontes (2005). *Child Abuse and Culture: Working with Diverse Families*. New York: The Guilford Press.

In addition, the task force recommends trainers visit the *Race Matters Consortium* at <http://www.racemattersconsortium.org/> This consortium is a diverse group of child welfare experts representing research, policy, administration, practice, and advocacy, who joined together in 1999 to systematically examine disproportional representation of individuals of different races and ethnic groups in the child welfare system. Today the Consortium has expanded to not only examine the disproportional representation, but to get a better understanding of those practices that will address the needs of children of color more appropriately, and to collaborate with others who understand the need for attention to the issues in an effort to influence change in child welfare practice and policy.

OCWTP Announcements

ODJFS Mandatory Meeting

The OCWTP has decided the annual ODJFS mandatory meeting for trainers of standardized curricula is not the best forum to communicate critical updates concerning what's happening across the State. To that end, we have determined that trainer updates will be provided through the OCWTP Newsletter *Common Ground*, and through the Trainers' ListServ. Should you have any questions, feel free to direct them to Lois Tyler at lojjean@aol.com or 614/251-6000.

Technology Announcements

The OCWTP has three very important technology-related announcements.

The OCWTP website has a new look. Trainers have a separate section which includes trainer development opportunities, news and updates, and resources.

The highly anticipated OCWTP Learning Management System (LMS) is coming! The technology work team is partnering with ODJFS to get the LMS up and running in 2008. The new LMS will have greater capabilities than our current system and will allow the OCWTP to make significant improvements to the delivery and management of trainings.

The OCWTP encourages all trainers NOT to upgrade laptops to the new Windows Vista for at least 6 months, as many software programs, including CPS, are not yet compatible with Vista.

refugees who enter the child welfare system, and recommended what trainers can do to make caseworkers and foster families more sensitive to the issues identified.

A summary of practical suggestions offered to trainers in many of the above presentations is found under *Trainer Tips* in this newsletter.

Feedback concerning the Trainer Event suggests that the OCWTP is not only open to, but hungry for the knowledge, resources, and skills needed to equip its trainers and trainees to be more effective with those who are culturally different from themselves. Perhaps the truest measure of success will be the extent to which the OCWTP remains committed to the spirit, principles and resources offered during the event, and translates them into policies and practices that will ultimately make a positive difference for its trainers and the content they train.

This year's trainer event is behind us; but participants' individual and collective journeys toward cultural competence continue. We hope that the spirit behind this year's trainer event remains. A better cultural understanding of ourselves and of the families we work with will make a difference in the quality of our relationships with them and the potential we have to make a positive, rather than negative, difference in their lives. Therefore, cultural issues must be taken into account, wrestled and reckoned with, and somehow addressed—not just in workshops on specific cultures—but for every training topic, in every training room, by every one of us.



Above: Tamara Davis in front of the diversity maps at the OCWTP Trainer Event. These highly detailed maps were developed to help trainers and RTCs become more informed about the growing diversity of Ohio's population.

MEPA CORNER



Trainer Question:

Can an agency deny a child's trans-racial placement with a prospective family who was overheard making derogatory statements throughout the pre-service and home-study process concerning racial and ethnic groups (including the racial/ethnic group of the child they wish to adopt)?

ODJFS Response:

Per Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rule, 5101:2-48-13, Non-discrimination requirements for adoptive placements, paragraph (G) (7):

"Agencies are required to document verbal comments, verbatim, or describing in detail any other indication made by a prospective adoptive family member living in the household or any other person living in the household reflecting a negative perspective regarding the race, color or national origin of a child for whom the prospective adoptive family [has] expressed an interest in adopting. The documentation shall indicate whether those comments were made before or after completion of the cultural diversity training which is required for all adoptive applicants. Documentation shall be included in the family's home-study, update, or an addendum to the home-study or update prior to consideration of placement or a matching conference. The matching committee shall consider the information to determine if it will impact the placement."

ODJFS goes on to state:

"Although MEPA rules are silent with respect to the issue of having discussions with foster and/or prospective adoptive parents about negative comments pertaining to a child's race, color or national origin (RCNO), any conversations that might take place would need to be extremely limited in nature and should take place immediately after learning of the alleged comments. Discussion should occur for the purpose of getting clarification about what the foster parents meant and determining if, in fact, the comments pertained to RCNO, with consideration given to the effect that such comments could have on a child(ren). There should be absolutely no mention of the family having to attend additional training, nor should the family be discouraged, in any way, from continuing to foster children belonging to the race in which the alleged comments were directed."

The trainer's role is to gather and document the information accurately. The matching committee's responsibility is to weigh the information carefully and determine if the placement is in the child's best interest.

Questions about MEPA surface often during training. Would you be ready to give an appropriate response? *Common Ground* offers trainers another helpful resource for MEPA issues. Send your inquiries to costerman@ihs-trainet.com.

REGIONAL NEWS

CORTC

Congratulations to Mikki Butcher, formerly with the SEORTC, who is now working at CORTC as the Adoption Liaison; AND, she is no longer Mikki Butcher! She was married in April and is now Mikki Holmes. In addition, Kathleen Dalton, previously CORTC's Adoption Liaison is now the Office Manager for the Professional Development Department at Franklin County Children Services; Rowleen Tedford is CORTC's clerical support for the Foster Care Training Department, and Sarah Tornichio recently received her MSW from Ohio State University. Congratulations to all!

ECORTC

East Central completed their thirteenth Annual Supervisory Conference in March with the help of Les Helms (PhD Candidate), Dr. Denise Goodman, and Dr. Denise Bronson who provided 3 great training days! Staff news includes an upcoming wedding of Natalie's daughter; Darla's twins becoming college seniors this year; the addition of a windmill on Connie's farm; and Brian's youngest child getting ready to attend kindergarten, while his oldest is going to be a teenager!

ECORTC staff ask trainers to keep handouts up to date, and to be timely in getting all necessary training material to the RTC. Trainers also need to follow all copyright rules for using materials in training. ECORTC is updating and digitizing trainer files. It would be helpful if trainers could scan or digitize their handouts and give them to the RTC.

NEORTC

Congratulations to Janice Morabeto who was recently awarded the NEORTC Trainer of the Year Award for 2007. Janice has been training for NEORTC for a number of years and her expertise in the mental health area is invaluable. She recently developed a training titled *Mental Health Disorders in Young Children* in direct response to needs expressed by area constituents. Due to Janice's positive and engaging style, NEORTC consistently receives positive comments about Janice's training during county site visits.

Dale Curry, PhD, Associate Professor for the Human Development and Family Studies Department at Kent State University, will present *Ethics for Trainers*, a new training to be offered on Tuesday, September 18, 2007. Dr. Curry is a former Training Coordinator for NEORTC. The objectives for this course promote awareness of the nature of ethical issues related to training and development

in human services; examine values and principles of the NSDTA Code of Ethics; apply the Code's values and principles to ethical incidents, and, contribute to a national dialogue and a better understanding of ethical standards for human services training and development professionals. This training is open to OCWTP trainers; however, registration is on a space-available basis. If you are interested in attending, please contact NEORTC Training Coordinator Martha Lucas, at (330) 379-1997, or e-mail her at: mlucas@summitkids.org.

NEORTC has a new procedure for entering the Education Center. Trainees, trainers, and visitors need to press the intercom button and identify themselves for admittance to the building. They will receive a training badge which must be worn while on site. A designated parking lot for trainees is to the right of the Education Center (lower-street level and designated with a sign). These changes were made to ensure

the safety of staff, trainers, trainees, and visitors using our training center. Please call Jeanne Bennett, manager of NEORTC at (330) 379-2003, if you have any questions.

NCORTC

NCORTC is offering pre-training for potential OCWTP trainers. Chris Cross will conduct the training July 12, 2007 from 9:00-1:00 pm. This training is for professionals interested in becoming a trainer for the OCWTP or for existing trainers who want to know more about how the OCWTP is structured. For more information contact Chris Cross at ccross@cuyahogacounty.us

WORTC

WORTC welcomes Victoria Phillips as their Foster Parent Training Secretary and Data Manager. Vickie replaces Susan Butler who left to work for the Green County Prosecutor's Office. Vickie was the Green County CSB HR secretary and started work in March.



It has become a tradition for the CORTC to dress in style for the Trainer Event.

Applause and Recognition

The OCWTP congratulates the following winners of the Linda Pope and Rising Star Awards. We are fortunate to have trainers of such dedication and expertise sharing their skills with Ohio's child welfare professionals and resource families.



Brian Bethel receiving the Rising Star Award from Dave Jackson

Rising Star Award

The 2007 Rising Star and Linda Pope Awards were presented during the luncheon at this year's annual Trainer Event, held in March. Brian Bethel was the recipient of this year's Rising Star Award. This award is given to acknowledge a new trainer's hard work and dedication and to recognize his or her promise for the future. It is presented to a trainer whose workshop delivery demonstrates exemplary skills, content expertise, and a working knowledge of child welfare.

Dave Jackson (SEORTC) presented the award and had this to say about Brian Bethel:

Mr. Bethel has been training for the OCWTP for only a few years. However, he is not a stranger to the field of child welfare. He began as a child welfare caseworker in the Southeast region, completing Caseworker Core in 1995, and then becoming a child welfare supervisor.

After working in child welfare, he moved into the field of mental health and continued to serve the families with whom we work. He is committed to life-long learning and skill development so he can help those persons who need it most.

As a trainer for the OCWTP, his dedication to children and families shines through in the presentation of his workshops. His workshops are packed with information, and teach the empathy and skills necessary for caseworkers and supervisors to competently work with populations such as the disabled, the chemically dependent, and persons who are in crisis. His thoughtful and well organized workshops are grounded in best practice and have earned him an average trainer score of 4.7 on a 5 point scale.

Linda Pope at the 1999 OCWTP Trainer Event



The Linda Pope Award is presented as an annual tribute to trainers who embody the characteristics of Ms. Pope, who trained for the OCWTP until her untimely death in 1999. Ms. Pope was a conscientious trainer with strong social work ethics. She was well known in all eight regions for developing a variety of workshops, including those on cults, substance abuse, and mental health. She took her responsibilities seriously and assured that every participant felt valued.

Mary Kay Hawkins (CORTC) announced Dr. Joseph Shannon as the 2007 Linda Pope Award recipient and talked about his skills and expertise:

Like Ms. Pope, Dr. Shannon has responded to the demands and diversity of our client populations, developing many training sessions at the RTCs' requests. Topics include Personality Disorders, Adult Psychopathology, Psychobiology of Hatred and Violence, Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, Self-Mutilation in Youth and Adults, Bi-polar and Mood Disorders, and Dysfunctional Families.

Dr. Shannon is a nationally recognized expert in his field. His expertise includes clinical counseling, consultation, administration, and supervision. He specializes in treating depression and anxiety disorders, chemical dependence, character pathology, and relationship issues. He is one of the most frequently requested trainers in the OCWTP.

For more information about the Linda Pope and Rising Star Awards, and a list of past winners, go to the Trainers section of the OCWTP website, www.OCWTP.com

Tenure Awarded to Dr. Dale Curry

Dr. Dale Curry recently received tenure and a promotion in his position as Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Studies in the Family and Consumer Studies Department at Kent State University. Dale is a long-time trainer for the OCWTP, and past NEORTC coordinator. In 2004, the OCWTP honored Dale for providing unwavering support for the professional development of Ohio's child welfare staff toward best-practice ideals by giving him the Dan Schneider Award at the Annual PCSAO conference.

Culturally Responsive Training Not Always Comfortable

Culturally responsive training is not necessarily an automatic or comfortable engagement for many trainers. It requires cultural awareness, sensitivity, and commitment in order to respond inclusively and with competence to the cultural needs of a diverse training audience.

The 2007 Trainer Event promoted culturally responsive training as a standard of best practice for OCWTP trainers. Attendees received a valuable collection of information to enhance their training effectiveness. The following are some of the *Trainer Tips* presented throughout the day:

- *Self awareness* — Assess your own cultural background and be cognizant of your own biases as prerequisites for cross-cultural training.
- *Incorporate cultural content in each curriculum/workshop* — Every curriculum/workshop should include cultural content that challenges self-examination, enhances cultural knowledge and promotes needed change for participants.
- *Know your training environment* — Use OCWTP's demographic maps to discover the cultural make-up of the region(s) where you train and consult RTC staff for additional insights concerning their region's demographics. To access the maps go to *For Trainers* section at www.ocwtp.com.
- *Place participants and their culture at the center of learning* — Training content becomes more meaningful to attendees when it is culturally linked to their experiences. Allow opportunity for participants to self-disclose cultural information to the group. Make it clear that you value all comments.
- *Be inclusive in the examples you give* — Use illustrations and media that reflect cultural diversity and avoid stereotypes. Focusing on any one particular group can be offensive and monotonous.
- *Ensure that the information shared about different cultures is correct authentic curriculum content about a cultural group prior to its presentation.* Conducting evidence-based research or seeking the expertise of a cultural consultant about a topic is highly recommended.
- *Integrate the OCWTP philosophy and standards on culture and diversity in your training* — Cultural competencies that support your topic area should be included in every training, and your definitions & cultural terms should be consistent with

those promoted by OCWTP. These are introduced in OCWTP's *Culture and Diversity Training of Trainers*. If you have not yet attended this training you are encouraged to do so ASAP.

- *Acknowledge respect and build on the knowledge, beliefs and experiences the group brings* — Effective trainers must recognize and value cultural differences. Each participant adds cultural enrichment to the training environment and to the knowledge of the trainer and other participants.
- *Respond immediately to cultural faux pas* — Even among experienced trainers, mistakes and mishaps will occur. Acknowledge them right away, employ humility, and regard each situation as a learning opportunity.
- *Become an active learner* — Learning is dynamic. As long as there is cultural diversity, there is always room to learn and grow. Enhance your knowledge through additional training, reading, and engagements with other cultural groups.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN PRACTICE



GIFTS OF PERSONAL HISTORY AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Following an activity at the OCWTP trainer event where trainers were given the opportunity to demonstrate their expertise on the ABCs of training protocols, a number of trainers were awarded with a special gift basket. The baskets were assembled by the staff at the eight Regional Training Centers and IHS. Each basket was packed with items representing the culture of the individuals, or agency creating it. Notes were included with the items explaining how they were culturally significant to the individual sending the gift.

HOLD THESE DATES

June 8, 2007	Classroom Performance System
August 28 - 30, 2007	Presentation Skills
November 14, 2007	Power Point TOT
December 10 - 12, 2007	Presentation Skills

To register and for location, contact Debra Sparrow at dsparrow@ihs-trainet.com

www.ocwtp.com

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