

Dealing with Different Cultures: Practitioners and Clients



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HUMAN MOVEMENT STUDIES

EPASE *Centre for Physical Activity
and Sport Education*



*General Exercise
and other forms of Physical Activity*



Centre for Olympic Studies



Ginnell Gyn





We all are working with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds

To be effective practitioners we need to be aware of factors that are part of clients' (and our own) cultural identities.



Enculturation and Acculturation

- We have all been enculturated – gone through the process of learning to live within a particular culture
- Some of us have also engaged in the process of acculturation, adopting the culture of another group (to varying degrees)
- Because of the variance in the adoption of a culture, we can't generalize and group people by culture



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You Are a Cultural Being

- What cultures have influenced you?



My Cultural Background

- Female
- Caucasian
- Middle class
- 2 parents
- Never homeless
- Not religious
- Heterosexual
- American
- Australian



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Norms

- Norms are standards, models, or patterns regarded as typical within a particular group or culture.
 - Greeting – handshake, one kiss, two kisses
 - Physical contact when communicating



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Values

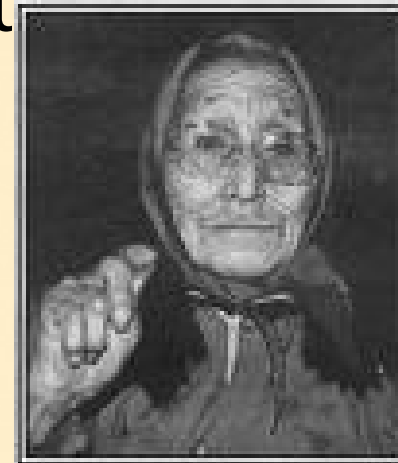
- Values are the ideals, customs, standards, or qualities towards which the people of a group have an affective regard.
 - May be positive (e.g., freedom, cleanliness, education) or negative (e.g., blasphemy, cruelty, crime)
 - Decisions - circular, top-down, or bottom-up
 - Wisdom - life experience, formal education, or a combination of both



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Beliefs

- Beliefs are the mental acceptance of and conviction in what is the truth or actuality.
 - Term(s) for and representation of God
 - Self
 - Before God?
 - Before community?
 - Right to free speech?
 - Respect of elders?



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Behaviors

- Objective elements of culture
 - How one eats
 - What one typically eats
 - Design and placement of one's residence
 - Dress
 - Language
 - Gender appropriate behavior



Translation of My Cultural Background

- Eat with a knife and fork
- English is my first language
- Take some things for granted
- Have experienced White privilege
- No consistent experience of discrimination
- Value education, autonomy, competence
- Have experienced acculturation (but mainly individualistic societies)
- Use clock-based time



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Your Cultural Translation

- You previously listed the cultures that have influenced you. What is the translation – how are these cultural influences demonstrated in your values, beliefs, and behaviours?



Time

- Clock-based time
 - Annoyed when other are late, normal to arrive late, people of stature arrive latest
 - Easily allows for planning to meet with different people
- Event-based time
 - Understanding of chronology reflects a relational strategy with one meeting/event following the other, with no clear tie to a clock
 - Exchanges can be less hurried
 - Exchanging of ideas and the process of the meeting is prioritized over time
- Understanding comes from clarification
 - Discuss which type of time will be adhered to when



Interpersonal Space

- Pairs (standing)– chat about favourite food/sport/place to travel
- Change distance
- At what distance do you feel most comfortable?



Space

- The interpersonal space that is considered to be comfortable in different situations can vary in different cultures (e.g., zone of personal distance)
 - 18 inches to 4 feet in mainstream North America
 - considerably less within some Latin American countries
 - considerably more in some North African and Asian countries.
- Client–practitioner – sitting along side and at a slight angle to each other or face–to–face



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Eye Contact

- Meaning of eye contact / lack of eye contact?
- Polite – lack of eye contact suggests disinterest
- Aggressive
- Attempt at seduction
- Avoid as sign of respect



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Invitations/RSVPing

- Invitation to participate in a program/research project – opportunity, request, or obligation?
- Invitations may be seen as exclusionary
- RSVP – expected, only if attending, only if not attending, only if not family (who is family?)



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Communication in Your Job

- What cultural expectations do you bring to your interactions with clients, patients, athletes?
- How does YOUR culture influence your interactions?
- What are some examples of alternative cultural norms regarding communication that some of your clients/patients/athletes may bring to your interactions with them?



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Communication

- Language (e.g., “yes” – obliging and want to be thought well of, I hear you, agreement?)
- Narration or questions/answers?
- Reluctance to state firm opinion (not in a position to make comment, do not want to disagree with others, or have no opinion?)
- Silence – genuine interest or indifference?



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What is Cultural Awareness?

- Assuming all clients' problems come from membership of a (probably oppressed) cultural or racial minority group?
- Being color/culture blind (assuming all people are alike regardless of color or culture)?



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No – It Means Being Aware!

- Aware of the culture of your clients
- Aware of our own cultural values, stereotypes, and biases
- Aware of the benefits of belonging to the dominant culture (White privilege)



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Culturally Specific Considerations

- Ghana/Ivory Coast – injuries can be blamed on juju (witchcraft); a band of juju men enlisted by the sports minister to give the national side an extra advantage
- How might an individual holding these beliefs influence your interactions with that person?



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Culturally Specific Considerations (continued)

- Sweden – Jante law – you are not supposed to behave as though you are better than your neighbor
- How might an individual holding these beliefs influence your interactions with that person?



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Culturally Specific Considerations (continued)

- Russia – fear that practitioners will share private information with sport authorities in power
- How might an individual holding these beliefs influence your interactions with that person?
 - State ethical norms (e.g., confidentiality) very clearly



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Culturally Specific Considerations (continued)

- Japan – coaches at the top of the team hierarchy; athletes have low status and will not talk to those with higher status; practitioner seen to be close to coach – athlete will not speak to practitioner
- How might an individual holding these beliefs influence your interactions with that person?



Other Examples?



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Concepts of Ownership

- Individualistic
- Collectivistic
- Somewhere in the middle
 - Example of docking pay
- How might differing concepts of ownership affect the behaviour of some of your clients/patients/athletes?



Summary

- Less concerned about what creates culture (e.g., nationality, race, religion)
- More concerned with reflecting on how individual cultural differences may affect effective interactions
- We need to be self-aware as well as other-aware

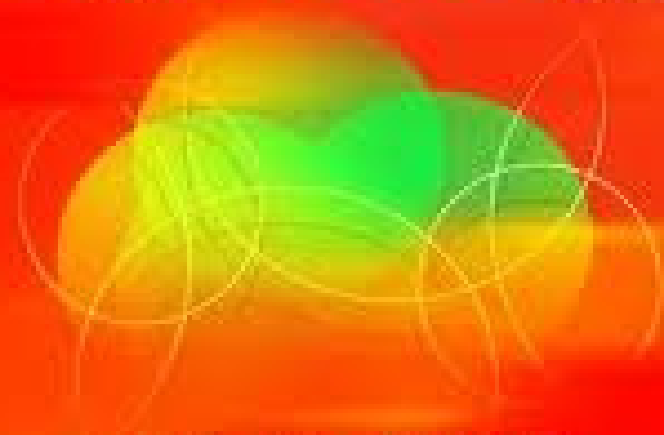


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謝謝



Cultural Sport Psychology



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