Implicit Bias and Cultural Competency

1. Common Assumptions About Clients
2. Role of Implicit Bias
3. Role of Culture
4. Interviewing Clients: Best Practices for Overcoming Personal Bias and Becoming Culturally Competent
4 Common Assumptions

1. Familiarity with legal aid/legal services
2. Familiarity with role of “government”
3. Will work around my availability
4. Easy to fill forms
Implicit Bias

“[B]ias in judgment and/or behavior that results from subtle cognitive processes (i.e. implicit attitudes and implicit stereotypes) that often operate at a level below conscious awareness and without intentional control.”
Implicit bias

- "In a democratic society, people should be judged as individuals and not as members of a group..”
- Positive stereotypes – no I don’t have tech support expertise.
Implicit Bias

Can be expressed in decision making processes:

• Exercise of Police or Prosecutorial Discretion
• Use of Force
• Physician Treatment Plans
• Employer Hiring
• Court Sentencing
3 Characteristics of Racism

• Racism is structural: embedded in institutions and culture

• Racism is ubiquitous: comes at us from different angles (explicit and implicit)

• Racism is intransigent: Deep and hard to get rid of
Poll

What does culture mean to you?

a. NATIONALITY
b. LANGUAGE
c. RELIGION/BELIEFS/CUSTOMS
d. SEXUAL IDENTITY
e. RACE
f. RURAL/URBAN
g. AGE
h. FOOD
i. OCCUPATION
j. MANY MORE-ANY OTHER
The Iceberg Concept of Culture
Like an iceberg, the majority of culture is below the surface.

**Surface Culture**
Above sea level
Emotional load: relatively low

- food
- dress
- music
- visual arts
- drama
- crafts
- dance
- literature
- language
- celebrations
- games

**Deep Culture**
Unspoken Rules
Partially below sea level
Emotional load: very high

- courtesy
- contextual conversational patterns
- concept of time
- personal space
- rules of conduct
- facial expressions
- nonverbal communication
- body language
- touching
- eye contact
- patterns of handling emotions
- notions of modesty
- concept of beauty
courtship practices
- relationships to animals
- notions of leadership
tempo of work
- concepts of food
- ideals of childrearing
- theory of disease
- social interaction rate
- nature of friendships
tone of voice
- attitudes toward elders
- concept of cleanliness
- notions of adolescence
- patterns of group decision-making
definition of insanity
- preference for competition or cooperation
tolerance of physical pain
- concept of “self”
- concept of past and future
definition of obscenity
- attitudes toward dependents
- problem-solving

roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and so forth
Role of Culture

- Perceptions, values, attitudes and beliefs
- Response to environment and circumstances
- Culture of 911
- Expectations
- External behavior
- Understanding of the court system and procedures
Measuring Cross-Cultural Competence

• Stage One: Denial

• Stage Two: Defense

• Stage Three: Minimization of Difference

• Stage Four: Acceptance of Difference

• Stage Five: Adaptation of Difference

• Stage Six: Integration of Difference
Measuring Cross-Cultural Competence

- Gain Awareness
- Take a look at your own culture
- Try a Little understanding
- Listen closely and pay attention
- Suspend judgment as much as possible
- Be flexible
Cultural humility (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998)

• Clients = Experts in their culture
• Self-awareness
• Commitment to Long-term learning
Empathy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw
4 Qualities of Empathy

1. Perspective taking;
2. Staying out of judgment;
3. Recognizing emotion in other people;
Empathy and Interviews

- **Building Rapport:** Confidentiality disclosure, body language, active listening

- **Suggested techniques:** Start with small talk, offer a choice of seats, ask open-ended questions

- **Purpose:** Why are we meeting today

- **Sensitive information:** Questions about domestic violence, sexual violence, other forms of abuse
Sensitive Information

- Repeat confidentiality
- Go slow if needed
- Clarifying, open-ended questions.
- Mindfulness about emotions
- Eye contact