EXPLORING PERSONAL VALUES AND BELIEFS

and their impact on cross cultural relationships and conflict

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OBJECTIVES

- Explore and identify our individual and collective cultures (Lifeways- Davis and Vakalahi)
- Identify potential sources of cross cultural conflict
- Introduce one model of conflict resolution

GENERALIZING VS. STEREOTYPING

Cultural generalization: Looking at the tendencies of a cultural group, their values, and/or beliefs and make generalizations about individual behavior based on group patterns.

Cultural Stereotype: Automatically applying generalizations to every person in the cultural group, or making generalizations about the group based on the behavior of only a few individuals.

Generalizations of cultural norms and values imply difference and not deficit.

RECOGNIZING LIFEWAYS

- Individuals
- Families
- Organizations
- Communities
- Societies

Lifeways are reflected at all levels of a given society.

Davis & Vakalahi, GMU, Department of Social Work
**INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY LIFEWAYS ARE MANIFESTED IN ALL THAT YOU DO EVERYDAY.**

*Think ....*
- Lawn care standards
- Interaction with neighbors
- Colors of homes
- Snow storm shoveling behavior
- Death in the community
- Birth of a baby
- Violation of neighborhood standards

**COMMUNITY LIFEWAYS**

- Help us adapt or fit in with our environment
- Transmitted across generations
- Shared or unique
- Exist in multiple levels of systems
- Are affected by historical and life events
- Are developmental over time

Reflected in behavior, customs, beliefs, traditions, rituals, traditions.

**ORGANIZATIONAL LIFEWAYS**

- Appropriate Dress
- Behavior with superiors
- Terminology
- Collective social and political beliefs
- Decision making process
- Interaction with peers
- What do people do on breaks?
- How are people rewarded?
- How are people reprimanded?

**LIFEWAYS**

- Keep calm because it's all about you

**POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CROSS CULTURAL CONFLICT**
**BRAINSTORM:**
How do you know when a conflict due to communication conflict is happening?

**Potential Sources of Cultural Conflict**
- Differences in communication styles
- Differences in cultural contexts
- Micromessages/Microinequities

**High Context**
- Uses implied meanings which arise from the setting

**Low Context**
- Focuses on literal meanings of words, independent of setting

Everyone engages in both, depending on:
- The relationships involved
- The situation
- The purpose of communication

**In Communitarian Settings**
- People see themselves as part of a circle of relationships
- Identity is as a member of a group
- In conflict, response is chosen jointly

**In Individualistic Settings**
- People see themselves as independent and autonomous
- Identity is individual
- In conflict, response is individual

**Social Relationships**

**Microinequities**

**IF YOU ARE LOW CONTEXT...**
- Your statements should be taken at face value
- You tend to decouple roles and functions from status
- Relationships begin and end quickly. Many people can be inside one’s circle; circle’s boundary is not clear.
- When you ask direct questions, they are not meant to offend

**IF YOU ARE HIGH CONTEXT**
- Verbal message is indirect; one talks around the point and embellishes it.
- You may communicate status through non-verbal gestures like deference or by being forceful with your communication style.
- Relationships depend on trust, build up slowly, are stable. One distinguishes between people inside and people outside one’s circle.
Puts people in a psychological bind.

“May feel insulted, but not know exactly why, and the perpetrator doesn’t acknowledge that anything has happened because he is not aware he has been offensive.”

In turn, that leaves the person of color to question what actually happened. “The result is confusion, anger and an overall sapping of energy” he says.

Dr. Derald Wing Sue

The idea that a person does not see color

Dr. Iqbal Unus, International Institute of Islamic Thought

CONFLICT RESOLUTION FRAMEWORKS

S - Stating the conflicting view
A - agreeing that a conflict exists without making any judgment.
L - Listening for and learning the difference
A - Advising one another
M - minimizing areas of disagreement. Seek agreement in as many aspects of the conflict as possible, thereby minimizing the areas where there is disagreement.

1. Problem Identification - Identify or name the situation and relevant issues. What is the conflict? What is the source of the conflict?
2. Perspectives - Create a list of every person, group, and institution impacted by the incident. How are each affected by the situation?
3. Challenges and Opportunities - With the varied perspectives in mind, what are the individual and institutional challenges and constraints within which the situation must be addressed?
4. Strategies - Brainstorm approaches for addressing the situation, attempting to maximize the extent to which the negative outcomes of the situation are addressed while simultaneously maximizing the extent to which you take advantage of educational and growth opportunities.
5. Solutions - Focus your strategies into a formal plan of action. Keep in mind the varied perspectives as well as the challenges and opportunities.
6. Expected Outcomes - Name the outcomes you foresee as a result of the solutions you identified. Revisit the perspectives step to ensure a standard of equity and fairness.

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COLOR BLINDNESS
REFERENCES


