

Beyond Competency: Practicing Cultural Humility to Foster **Belonging** in Multicultural Contexts

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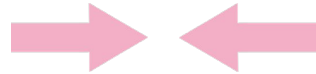
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My multi-perspective background

- Lecturer/Researcher for teachers in adult education both in Asia and Europe (**impact**)
- K-12 teacher (both elementary and High School) at German school in Chiang Mai, Thailand (**experience**)
- Mom (**vested interest**)



When Helping Harms: Stone vs. Steel Axes

A true story

Sharp, L. (1952). Steel axes for stone-age Australians. *Human organization*, 11(2), 17-22.



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A new approach:

Cultural Humility:

is a perspective that involves practicing lifelong learning, exercising self-reflection and critique, recognizing the dynamics of power and privilege, and being comfortable with not knowing.



Research:

1. Growing understanding that cultural identity needs to be incorporated into therapy (Comas-Diaz, 2012).
2. Clients from minority cultures were not showing as positive outcomes
3. No clear correlation between therapists who are “culturally competent” and good outcomes



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Culture:

- Originally only race and ethnicity—now expanded to include nationality, language, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability, etc.
- Shapes our decisions, thoughts, emotions, and behavior.



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What are some cultural challenges therapists face?

- Struggle to know how to support clients when cultural background is different
- Struggle with not wanting to look incompetent



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Privilege

“Let them eat
cake.”



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Safety/Mobility:

Example from Gaza in 2017



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“ Interventions aimed at promoting mental health in Gaza cannot avoid including a perspective that includes human rights and social justice (Kteily-Hawa et al., 2020). The main lesson learnt from our study is that people deprived of their freedom and besieged for long periods in an environmentally, politically and socially compromised condition, are at risk to lose fundamental protective factors and at risk of being compromised in their mental well-being.

Ultimately, our study might challenge the mainstream notion that deteriorated mental health conditions will compromise individuals’ quality of life (Gerino et al., 2017). On the contrary in the case of the Gaza Strip and other places affected by chronic violations of basic human rights, undermined living conditions, and quality of life will contribute to a weakening source of resilience, hope, and might increase the risk of psychological suffering (Veronese et al., 2019).

From: Veronese, G., Pepe, A., Diab, M., Jamey, Y. A., & Kagee, A. (2021). Living under siege: resilience, hopelessness, and psychological distress among Palestinian students in the Gaza Strip. *Global Mental Health*, 8, e40.



Bias

Fixed Thinking:
Do you
put
people/cultures
in boxes ?

Growth/Hopeful Thinking:
Or do you
draw your boxes
with dotted lines ?



Question:

As we engage clients across cultures, what can we retain and what can we discard?



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put on



take off



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Propose:

- Competencies are *add-ons*
- Humility asks us to *take-off/move away* from our competency



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Cultural Competency

CHECKLIST













Challenges with Cultural Competency

- **Positives:**
- Learns about other cultures
- Adapts behaviors and communication styles
- **Challenges:**
- **Often**, the one with power and privilege still retains the power
- **Often** the majority (and more privileged) culture is centered.
- Static

Is it possible to *fully* know and understand another culture?



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Origin of Cultural Humility

“Cultural humility is a process of **self-reflection** and discovery to **understand oneself** and then **others** in order to build honest and trustworthy relationships”
(Tervalon & Murray- Garcia, 1998).



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Cultural Humility in Practice:

Listen to someone's story
for **understanding**,
without judgment,
while acknowledging
one cannot fully know their situation.
Cultural Humility acknowledges what we do **NOT**
know rather than what we know.



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The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is him/herself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.

— Paulo Freire —

AZ QUOTES



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Resources



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Questions for Self-Reflection

1. Where **could we** we causing harm out of good intentions?
2. Where **could we** we giving bad advice because we have not learned the culture?
3. Where **could we** we drawing with boxes and not dotted lines?
4. What **could we discard/take off** as we engage with clients from a different culture?



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5.

The Educator's Role in Creating a Classroom Culture of Belonging: Reimagining Diversity, Equity, Inclusion for the Multi-diverse Classroom

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RESOURCES

VIDEO: CULTURAL HUMILITY: PEOPLE, PRINCIPLES, AND PRACTICES

"Cultural Humility: People, Principles and Practices," is a new 30-minute documentary by Vivian Chávez, that mixes poetry with music, interviews, archival footage, images of community, nature and dance to explain what is "Cultural Humility" and why we need it.

Watch this documentary series and download [more information here](#).

Sana Loue

Diversity, Cultural Humility, and the Helping Professions

Building Bridges Across Difference

 Springer

CULTURAL HUMILITY

ENGAGING
DIVERSE IDENTITIES
IN THERAPY

JOSHUA N. HOOK, DON DAVIS, JESSE OWEN,
AND CIRLEEN DEBLAERE

<https://belonging.berkeley.edu/>



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Questions



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