

Working With Multi-challenged Clients in a Changing Provincial Context: Male Victims, Intersectionality, and Increasing Expectations

Prepared by

Robert S. Wright, MSW, RSW for
Victims' Services Annual Fall Training

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Who Is Robert Wright?

- A registered SW Private Practitioner
- Former Race Relations Coordinator of the Dartmouth District School Board
- Former Executive Director of Family & Children's Services of Cumberland County
- Former Executive Director of N.S.'s Child & Youth Strategy
- Clinical Member of ATSA
- ManTalk Facilitator

Creating a Circle of Safety

- As I note later, sometimes conversations about marginalized and racialized populations and other sensitive issues in North America is difficult. What can we do today to ensure that we are all feeling safe today?

Some Premises for Consideration

- Our usual methods aren't working!
 - Increased complexity
 - Increasing expectations of/on government
 - Increasing diversity/new populations

Increased Complexity

- Erosion of community and social institutions
 - Community Displacement
 - Economic and increasing internal diversity (eg. Biracial youth, 2nd generation immigrants)
 - Economic Collapse
 - Residential Mobility
 - Secularization
 - “Crime is Down, Fear is Up”

Increased Complexity

- Greater consequences for social failures
 - Disappearing low education/subsistence/ resource economy
- Increased Demand for Education
 - Dramatically affecting those traditionally excluded or for whom school is a hostile environment (racism, homophobia)

Increased Complexity

- Growing understanding of intersectionality
- Growing understanding of social determinants
 1. Income and Social Status
 2. Social Support Networks
 3. Education and Literacy
 4. Employment/Working Conditions
 5. Social Environments
 6. Physical Environments
 7. Personal Health Practices and Coping Skills
 8. Healthy Child Development
 9. Biology and Genetic Endowment
 10. Health Services
 11. Gender
 12. Culture

Increasing Expectations

- 1991 Children and Family Services Act professionalizes that sector. Child Welfare service delivery shifts to government agency delivery.
- DCS funded Community-based agencies are increasingly formalized by the implementation of service agreements.
- Collaboration, integration and silo-free delivery prominent in NS today (Nunn commission, horizontal governance)
- Department of Education has twice exercised its authority by removing elected school boards that were perceived as ineffectual
- After Rehteah Parsons, increasing expectations to address “rape culture”

An Example: Collaborative/Integrated Sexual Assault Service Delivery

- May of 2013 Nova Scotia announced new funding “to help communities to address sexual violence.”
 - “\$700,000 . . . to **collaboratively** provide services to victims of sexual violence.”
 - “\$200,000 in grants to support and foster more **collaboration and partnership**”
- Signals increased expectations that SAR is collaborative and delivers “core elements”

Increasing Diversity

- Historically Racialized and Aboriginal Canadians finally gaining “space” in society
- Global forces creating dramatic increases in population diversity
- All sectors experiencing effects of globalization
- Arabic is the 2nd largest language group in NS today

An Example: ANSMHAI

- MHCC sub-committee identified the lack of services to racialized and immigrant people
- Nova Scotia Mental Health Review acknowledged lack of services to African Nova Scotians
- Initiative is underway to build capacity within current delivery system

An Example: ManTalk

- 1/3 of women experience unwanted sex 1/6 of men
- Current Sexual Assault Resources built out of need to serve women . . . Limited resources for men.
- ManTalk founded to provide serviced to male victims/survivors

Implications on Service Delivery

- Traditional Intervention Focus is Limited
 - Clients are often seen as the problem, defective, problemed, need to be fixed
 - Clients therefore are the focus of our attention/intervention
 - When clients are resistant or unsuccessful we blame them for our failure

Old Model

Just Looked at Client



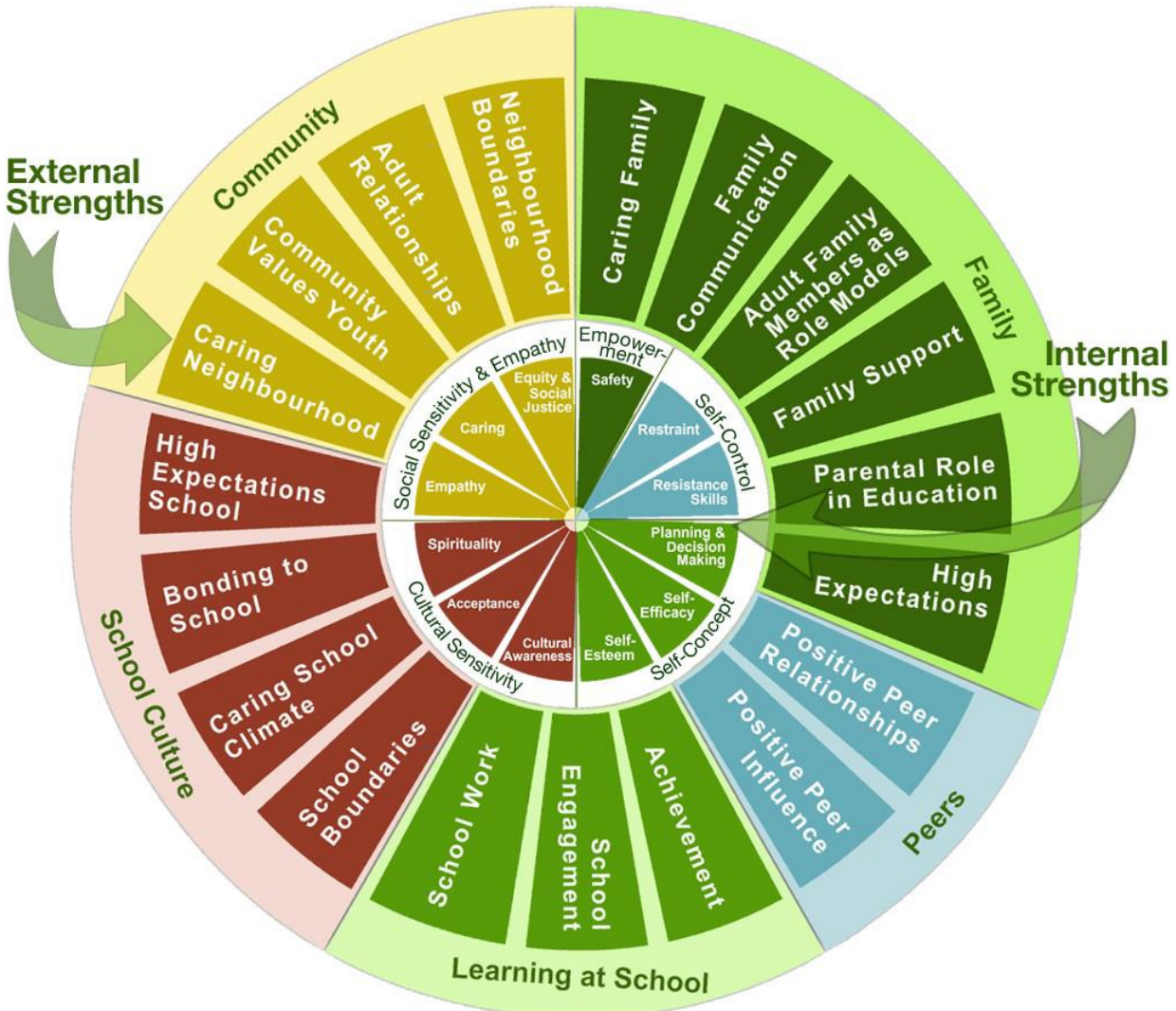
Newer Models

- Are responsive to complexity
- Are based on theories that focus on systems:
 - MST widely seen as effective for multi-challenged youth (Henggeler)
 - Ecostructural work engages individuals, families and communities (McGoldrick, Bronfenbrenner)
 - Resiliency theory identifies multiple domains for intervention (Ungar,)
 - Social justice interventions (anti-oppressive practice) informed by the culture/class location of client and understanding of social determinants (Lalonde, Strier)

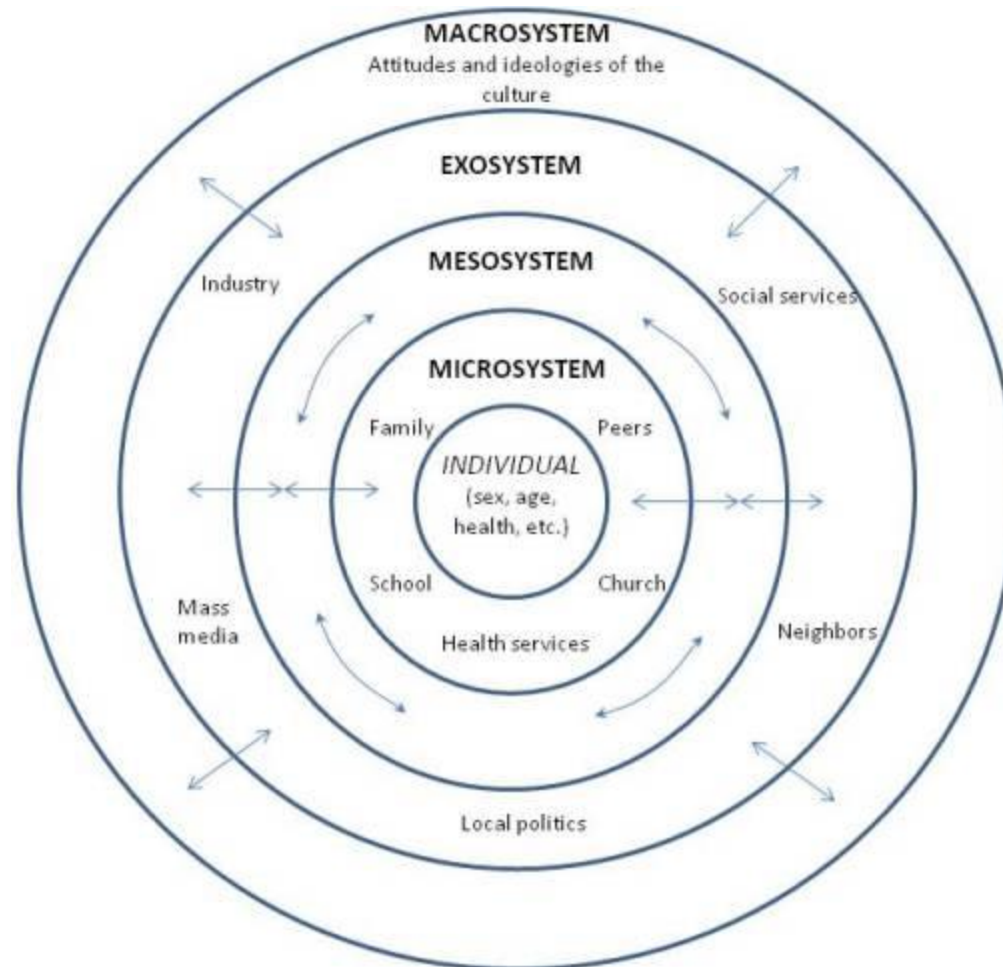
Newer Models . . .

- Recognize diversity and intersectionality (marginalized and multi-challenged clients)
- Recognize that structural challenges that affect multi-challenged clients requires social justice responses
- Mobilize services to marginalized populations

Look at the Whole System: Resilience



Look at the Whole System: Bronfenbrenner



Powerful Models

- All speak of understanding “context” of clients
- All speak of the need for “helpers” to be able to bridge the gap between where they are and where the client is
- We have not learned models for doing that

Cultural Competence as a Framework

Cultural Competence: Definition

- Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Cultural competence comprises four essential capacities:
 - A. We must understand our own cultural positions and how they differ from and are similar to others
 - B. We must understand the social and cultural reality in which we live and work and in which our clients live and work
 - C. We must cultivate appropriate attitudes towards cultural difference
 - D. We must be able to generate and interpret a wide variety of verbal and non-verbal responses
 - E. We must understand structural oppression and demonstrate awareness and commitment to social justice**

A) Nichols' Model for Understanding Cultural Difference

Philosophical Perspective on Cultural Difference. Edwin Nichols (cf. work of Jung)

Different world cultures developed out of differing physical environments.

These world views have differing constructs:

- Axiology (values)
- Epistemology (way of knowing)
- Logic (principles of reason)
- Process (practice of reason)

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

DEVELOPED BY EDWIN J. NICHOLS, PH.D.

ETHNIC GROUPS ETHNIC WORLDVIEW	AXIOLOGY	EPISTEMOLOGY			LOGIC	PROCESS
		APPLIED	PEDAGOGY	METHODOLOGY		
EUROPEAN EURO-AMERICAN	Member-Object The highest value lies in the object or the acquisition of the object	One knows through Counting and Measuring	Parts to Whole	Linear and Sequential <i>-Assembly line-</i>	Dichotomous <i>Either/Or</i> <i>-Newtonian theory-</i>	All sets are repeatable and reproducible <i>-Technology-</i>
AFRICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN LATINO/A ARAB	Member-Member The highest value lies in the relationships between persons	One knows through Symbolic Imagery and Rhythm (function) <i>-Gladwell <u>Blink</u>-</i>	Whole Holistic Thinking <i>-The BIG picture-</i>	Critical Path analysis <i>-Cut to the chase-</i>	Diunital <i>Union of opposites</i> Difrasismo <i>-Aztec thought-</i> The In Between <i>Ibn 'Arabi</i> <i>-Quantum theory-</i>	All sets are interrelated through human and spiritual networks <i>-Black church-</i>
ASIAN ASIAN AMERICAN POLYNESIAN	Member-Group The highest value lies in the cohesiveness of the group	One knows through Transcendental Striving <i>-Tree the forest-</i>	Whole and parts are seen simultaneously <i>-To read a Chinese word-</i>	Cyclical and Repetitive <i>-Stroke order in writing a Chinese word-</i>	Nyaya <i>-The objective world is conceived independent of thought and mind-</i> <i>-Chaos theory-</i>	All sets are independently interrelated in the harmony of the universe <i>-Keiretsu-</i>
NATIVE AMERICAN	Member-Great Spirit The highest value lies in oneness with the Great Spirit	One knows through Reflection and Spiritual Receptivity <i>-Purification rites-</i>	Whole is seen in cyclic movement <i>-Seasons-</i> <i>-Medicine Wheel-</i>	Environmentally experiential reflection <i>-Rites of Passage-</i>	Great Mystery <i>-A set of 4 and a set of 3 form the whole-</i> <i>-Super string theory-</i>	All sets are interrelated through the elements, plant, animal, and spiritual networks <i>-White Buffalo-</i>

This does not suggest pigeon-holing

Just because a person is identifiably a member of a particular ethno-cultural, racial or aboriginal group does not mean they will ascribe to a pre-set notion of that groups culture.

The model does give us some understanding of how people can differ in themes related to values, worldview, etc.

B) Social, Cultural and Historical Context

North American Diversity is fraught with complicated and tragic history. In addition to understanding cultural difference we need to understand historical location of peoples, historical oppressions

- **Enslavement of Africans, Genocide of First Nations, Global strife resulting in trans-global immigration, historical and institutionalized homophobia and patriarchy**

A local knowledge of how our racist and discriminatory history is a living legacy is necessary: Africville, Cornwallis, homophobia, poverty, rape culture

(Aylward talks of the need for this knowledge to aid in our ability to “spot issues”)

C) Appropriate Attitudes

Cultural competence requires that practitioners actually *value* diversity, not just tolerate it. In a nation that acknowledges multiple founding peoples, that was built up on the foundation of ethnic/immigrant labour and whose future depends on immigration any other attitude should reasonably be seen as unacceptable.

D) Communicating Across Cultures

Cross cultural communication is a complex study in cultural hermeneutics. In sociology: the context of a person's world view is necessary for the proper understanding and interpretation of behaviour and rhetoric.

Before meaningless, unnatural, non-human or immature behaviour and corresponding values are attributed to people of another culture, it is better to begin by doubting the adequacy of one's own judgment and knowledge.

- **Elmar Holenstein**

E) Social Justice Intervention

- Anti-oppressive practice challenges us to see the structural issues affecting clients
- Requires affirmation of and participation in movements that highlight and address structural issues
 - Solidarity Halifax
 - Canada Without Poverty
 - Ujamaa
 - Occupy movement

Questions

- How do persons who differ from you and experience complexity assess within first meeting you that you can understand them?
- What social justice initiatives are underway in your area that would be natural partners for you or your agency?
- When would you be aware that location of your client is creating a barrier which needs focussed attention to resolve?
- How and when would you raise the issue?

Q & A

Final Considerations

Lunch!



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