

Cultural Competence for Nova Scotian REALTORS November 20, 2013

Prepared by

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Who Is Robert Wright?

- A registered SW Private Practitioner
- Former member of the NSASW Council
- PhD Student in Sociology – Race, Identity, Power
- Member Racial Equity Committee of NSBS
- Former Race Relations Coordinator of the Dartmouth District School Board

Culturally Competent REALTORS: Why?

- Racialized, Immigrant, and Aboriginal Canadians are gaining increasing space in society. Workplaces and professions are diversifying and so is the population served by all professionals.

Culturally Competent REALTORS: Why?

- Housing is a critical aspect of people's lives. Equity and justice in housing is a critical part of building a just society. REALTORS are important in this work

Culturally Competent REALTORS: Why?

- Principles of cultural competence are being recognized as foundational knowledge for professionals. The courts have begun to identify that. If formal complaints or other difficulties with REALTORS' performance is ever adjudicated, this test of competence will be applied:
 - The reasonable person must be taken to be aware of the history of discrimination faced by disadvantaged groups in Canadian society protected by the Charter's equality provisions. . . . The reasonable person is cognizant of the racial dynamics in the local community, and, as a member of the Canadian community, is supportive of the principles of equality (R.v.S. (R.D.), [1997] 3 SCR 484, para. 46, 48)

Culturally Competent REALTORS: Why?

- The NAR in the U.S. has instituted a programme called “At Home With Diversity” in response to marketplace demographic shift.
- Immigrants and minorities are a major source of business for the real estate industry. The total minority buying power in the U.S was \$1.5 trillion in 2002. Homeownership rates among immigrants are also rising at rates such that, minorities will account for an estimated two-thirds of the new household growth in the United States in the next ten years.

Culturally Competent REALTORS: Your Questions?

- What are your questions as we begin this day?

Culturally Competent REALTORS: Your Questions?

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**

Draw a “circle of safety”

- Agree to make this a “culturally safe” space:
 - Allow each other space to ask sincere questions without the fear of being judged and accused
 - Share from experience, but do not request that others do so
 - Ask about words or language you may not understand rather than avoid topics that may be sensitive
- What can we do to ensure that we conduct the day in a way that ensures your safety?

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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>

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Nichol's Model is consistent with a growing understanding and articulation of Aboriginal Traditional Ecological Knowledge: an Ancient and yet ever evolving body of knowledge, practice and belief which concerns itself with the inter relationship of all living things with and within their environment.

Africentricity

- There is a growing global and local understanding of the fundamental elements of African thought, culture and philosophy. Somewhat controversial, certainly not standardized, nevertheless its growing legitimacy has been established. Its hallmark is the assertion of a worldview that places all people of African descent at its centre, asserts a common culture, philosophy and history and critiques and perhaps even rewrites global history from this perspective

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.

Bottom Line

People are different and
we can not treat different
peoples as if we were all
the same

Differing Values Exercise

- Member-Object
 - The highest value lies in the object or the acquisition of the object
- Member-Member
 - The highest value lies in the relationships between persons

Differing Values Exercise

- What would you consider to be the thing/value that is most important to you: Family or Career?

B) Social, Cultural and Historical Context

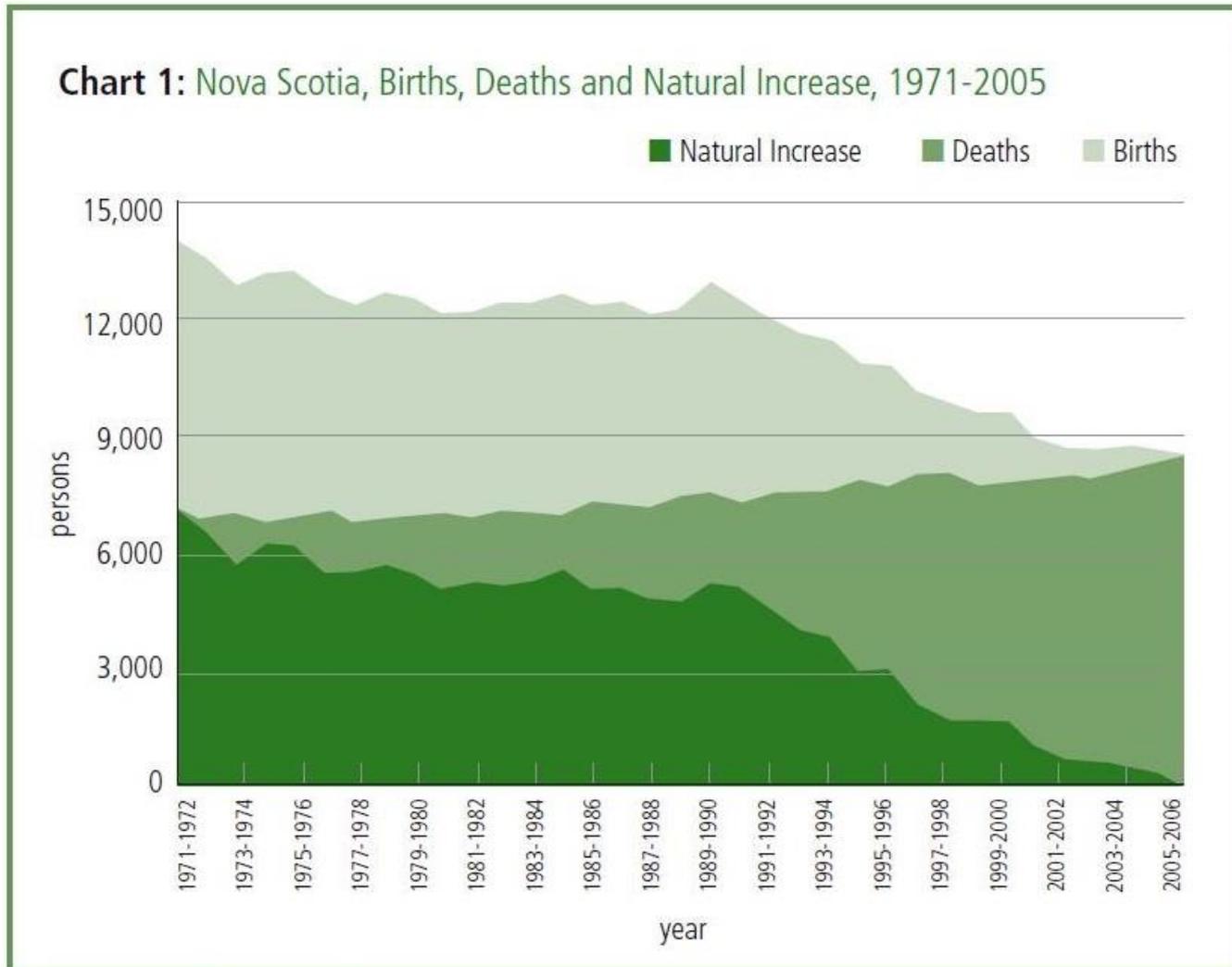
- North American Diversity is fraught with complicated and tragic history. In addition to understanding cultural difference we need to understand historical location of peoples, historical oppressions
 - **Enslavement of Africans, Genocide of First Nations, Global strife and economic repression resulting 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”)

B) Social, Cultural and Historical Context

- Similarly, global strife, limited economic opportunity and other forces which promotes international immigration create sensitivities which must be respected.
- Also a knowledge of local demographics is necessary.

Local Demographics



Source: Statistics Canada, Annual Population Estimates

Local Demographics

Nova Scotia

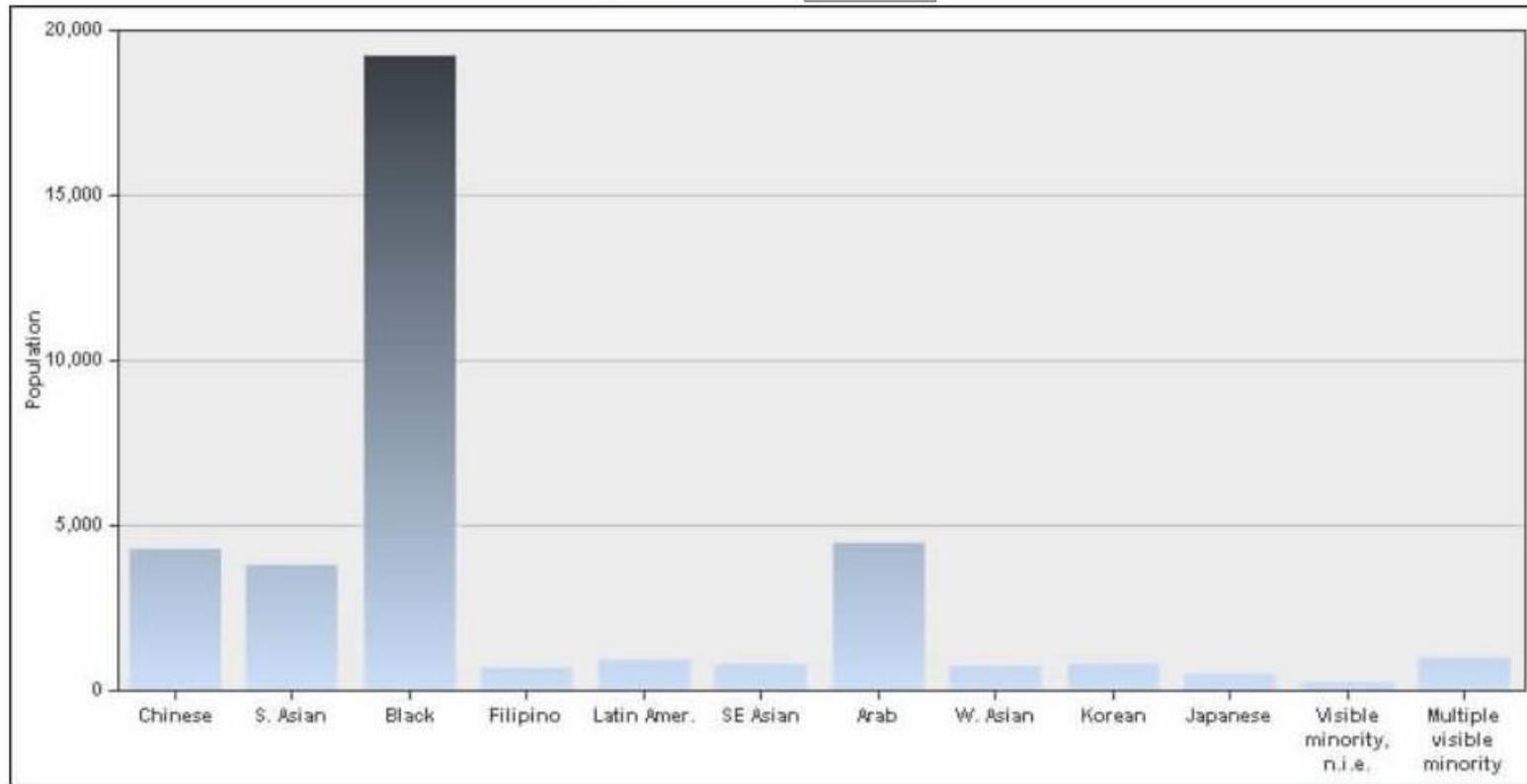
Visible minority population characteristics for both sexes

[Description](#)

Select a view

Both sexes ▾

Submit



CIBC Diversity Monitoring

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

Communicating About Culture

- Cultural competence requires the ability to comfortably and competently ask clients about cultural issues that may be a consideration in the context of your work with them.

Cultural Issues of Clients

- What are the kind of typical considerations that factor into a person/family's decision to buy a particular home?
- What additional cultural considerations may influence a person/family's decision to buy a particular home?

E) Social Justice Commitment

- We must demonstrate an awareness of how structural issues affect our sector, its members and clients
- We must demonstrate an active programme aimed at addressing systemic issues of exclusion and oppression

A Few Questions

- Consider the real estate sector. What are the most pressing diversity issues?
- Consider how persons who might differ from you would be able to assess within first meeting you that you value diversity and are a “culturally safe” person with whom to deal.
- Consider your “cultural competence resources” within your organization. Who are the persons who can serve as “resident expert”?

Cultural Competence: How?

- Pre service training/internships/apprenticeships
- Conduct organizational assessment of Cultural Competence
- Develop organizational plan to increase Cultural Competence
- Employ and support culturally competent (not just culturally diverse) practitioners as agents of change
- **Make available systematic coaching/consulting**
- Provide continuing education in Cultural Competence

Cultural Competence: How Not

- Do not place the responsibility for cultural competence solely on the shoulders of “diverse” staff – particularly when these persons are among the most junior persons on staff.
- Do not confuse cultural celebrations for cultural competence training.

Q & A

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