

LGBTQ+ Cultural Competence for Student Support Workers of HRSB

**Prepared and Presented by:
Robert S. Wright, MSW, RSW and
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LGBTQ+ Cultural Competence

Propositions and Goals

- Identify, acknowledge, and make transparent race and diversity with a particular focus on LGBTQ+ issues
- Accept the responsibility to create safe space, mentor, and advocate on behalf of “at-risk” students
- Seek additional resources
- Consider the context and experience of LGBTQ+ students and colleagues
- Consider the role of Student Support Workers for LGBTQ+ students

Your Presenters: Their Stories



- Chris Cochran
- Esthetician
- Trans-Gender, Multi-Racial Drag Performer



- Robert Wright
- Social Worker/
Consultant
- Former SSW

Cultural Competence: Why?

- Racialized, Immigrant, Aboriginal, and LGBTQ+ Canadians are gaining increasing space in society. Historical social injustices are being addressed, conditions affecting Aboriginal peoples are being recognized, immigration and engaging heretofore disenfranchised Nova Scotians is key to future of Nova Scotia economy

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 (critical cultural self-analysis)
 - 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

LGBTQ+: Definition

- Relating to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered persons, queer, questioning, intersexed, two-spirited and other non-gender conforming, and persons of sexual orientations and expressions that are different than heteronormative, same sex monogamous models.
- Some refer generically to the Queer Community. Which is different than using the term as a pejorative.

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>

LGBTQ+ Worldview

- We should expect that LGBTQ+ persons would have a world view that has been influenced by the growing knowledge of their rich history
- However the worldview would be influenced by generations of systemic oppression and persecution
- There is a new openness of expression and identity that is influenced by social media and the accessibility and acceptability of LGBTQ+ identities.

Bottom Line

People are Different
And we can not treat
different peoples as if we
were all the Same

B) Social, Cultural and Historical Context

North American Diversity is fraught with complicated and tragic history

- **Enslavement of Africans, Genocide of First Nations, Global strife resulting in trans-global immigration, historical oppression of LGBTQ+**

A local knowledge of how our racist history is a living legacy is necessary: Africville, Cornwallis, Lack of Accessible Health Services to Trans-persons.

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.

Appropriate Attitudes Towards LGBTQ+ Persons and Issues . . .

Encouraged by gay and lesbian leaders, Mrs. [Corretta Scott]King ... made space for the black poet and openly lesbian Audre Lorde in the [20th] anniversary [of the March on Washington's] ... line-up of speakers. Given the homophobia of some civil rights leaders taking part in the rally, King's decision to make room for a lesbian speaker was nothing short of prophetic. So was Lorde's brief speech:

Appropriate Attitudes Towards LGBTQ+ Persons and Issues (continued)

I am Audre Lorde, speaking for the National Coalition of Black Gays. Today's march openly joins the black civil rights movement and the gay civil rights movement in the struggles we have always shared, the struggle for jobs, for health, for peace and for freedom. We marched in 1963 with Dr. Martin Luther King and dared to dream that freedom would include us, because not one of us is free to choose the terms of our living until all of us are free to choose the terms of our living.

Michael G. Long - HuffingtonPost

Appropriate Attitudes Towards LGBTQ+ Persons and Issues

- Too few African Canadians are aware that LGBTQ+ persons were in the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement and continue to lead the movement.

Consider:

- Bayard Rustin
- James Baldwin
- Stonewall's Leadership of Trans Women of Colour
- Black Lives Matter Toronto Queer and Trans Leadership

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**

Elmar Holenstein Paraphrased

Before you conclude that I
am crazy you should consider
the possibility that you are
stupid!

E) Social Justice Commitment

- We must understand the nature of privilege
- 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
- We must shift the burden away from oppressed and marginalized persons having to “prove” racism and construct the tools to dismantle it to privileged persons having to acknowledge and understand systemic oppression and having the responsibility to ensure equity

Social Justice for LGBTQ+ Persons

- Are LGBTQ+ students and school staff disadvantaged and in need of social justice allies?
- Are Student Support Workers able and willing to serve as those allies?

Q&A



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