# Difference Matters Spring 2018

Shamni Uthayasoorian and Kiarra Hill
The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

# Introduction

- Every year, the number of international students studying in the United States dramatically increases
- International students are often faced with acculturative stress and adjustment problems
- Stressors include language or communication barrier, financial strains, interpersonal conflict, etc

Wang (2009)

# Language and Communication Barrier

- For many countries, English is not the first language
- Difficulties faced in the following area:
  - Challenges in comprehending spoken English
    - Interpersonal
    - Academic
    - Professional
  - Challenges in expressing oneself
    - Interpersonal
    - Academic
    - Professional
  - Unable to meet expectations for graduate-level work

# Financial Strain

- International students pay twice as much for tuition
- International students pay out-of-pocket
  - Currency exchange rates vary
- Difficult to obtain financial aid
  - Most financial aid are limited to U.S. citizens and permanent residents
- Limited options to obtain employment in the U.S.
  - Visa restrictions
- Have to demonstrate financial ability to the university

# Interpersonal Conflict

- Different cultural values may lead to misunderstandings
  - Differences in Eastern and Western culture
- Difficulties in conflict resolution due to language barriers
  - Inability to communicate effectively to set boundaries or reach compromise

# Other Factors Associated with Adjustment Problems

- Age
- Gender
- Marital Status
- English Language Proficiency
- Academic Level
- Major Fields of Study
- Length of Stay
- Region of the World/Country of Origin
- Size of School
- Orientation
- Living Arrangements
- Employment at Home
- Previous International Experience
- National Status Accorded
- Parents Educational Background

(Wang, 2009)

# Resilience

- Resilience moderately associated with background variables.
- Resilience better correlated with adjustment problems than background variables.
- Highly negatively correlated with adjustment problems.
- Resilience has the effect on adjustment problems.
  - Students who are highly resilient have lower adjustment problems.
- Why is this important?
  - Design ways to improve resilience among international students and help them adjust better the new environment.

(Wang, 2009)

# How Should Cultural Competence Be Viewed?

"Cultural competence, therefore, is an acknowledgement and incorporation of, on the part of clinicians and healthcare systems, the importance of culture, **the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs**"

- Empathy
- Curiosity
- Respect

(Kodjo, C., 2009)

# Why is Cultural Competence Important

- More racially and ethnically diverse people in the USA
- Asia is largest source of immigrants
  - No longer Latin America
- More Millennials than baby boomers
- Changes in family structures
- Women's "role" changing
- Number of those not identifying with a specific religion has increased
- Aging Population

("10 demographic trends that are shaping the U.S. and the world")

# Why Now?

Integrating cultural competence into the curriculum of rehabilitation studies in graduate school helps develop:

- Self-awareness
- Confidence
- Advocacy characteristics

(Matteliano & Stone, 2006)

Combating Natural Human Response:

- Illusory correlation
- Out-group bias

(Steed, 2014)

# Why Now?

Table 1. Stages of Intercultural Maturity Model

| | Cognitive | Intrapersonal | Interpersonal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Initial | culturally naïve, non-reflective acceptance of knowledge from authorities, ethnocentric, resistance to new ways of thinking | lack of awareness of personal values and identity, insecurity, differences in others viewed as a threat to self | ego-centric, moralistic view of others, differences from own culture viewed as wrong, interaction limited to personal cultural group |
| Intermediate | increased reliance on personal experiences and multiple sources of knowledge, beginning of ethno-relative perspective | beginning of internal locus of values and identity, exploration of personal cultural identity | less-judgmental, more inclusive view of differences, increased interaction with others outside of personal cultural group |
| Mature | ability to understand and interact with multiple world views | comfort with personal identity, open to discussing values and beliefs without feeling threatened | global perspective, appreciation of differences, comfortable interacting with diverse individuals |

Adapted from King and Baxter-Magolda, 2005, p. 576

From Steed, 2014 p. 81

# It's More than Knowing Cultural Correlates

- Self-awareness
- Acceptance of cultural differences
- Acknowledge power dynamics
- Cultural Knowledge

(Kodjo, C., 2009)

# Tips

- Add competence information into questionnaires
  - Have them completed before 1st visit
    - Pre-stamped envelopes, electronic forms
- Attend culturally diverse workshops/seminars
  - World Federation of Occupational Therapists
  - National Black Occupational Therapy Caucus (NBOTC)
  - National Black Association of Speech-Language and Hearing (NBASLH)
  - National Latino/a Psychological Association
  - International Professional Organizations
- Remember, identity is intersectional
- Contact local agencies
- Provide supplementary information
- Ask open-ended questions:
  - What are their priorities, concerns, and available resources

# How to Implement Cultural Competence in your Group or Class

integration of cultural competence into the curriculum of rehabilitation studies in graduate school helped develop:

- Self-awareness
- Confidence
- advocacy characteristics

Goal: Foreign-born individuals receive rehab services that reflect their needs

Matteliano & Stone, 2006

# Breaking Down the Statistics

- 1,766 international students enrolled at the university from more than 90 countries
- 1,372 international scholars from more than 75 countries
- In the undergraduate class entering Fall 2017, over 500 students were international students

(Class Profile)

# Mental Health Services Awareness

- Counseling and Psychological Services
  - Walk-in, medication management, counseling
- CECMH -Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health
- NAMI- National Alliance on Mental Illness
  - Chapel Hill
- Sister Talk
  - UNC Wellness
- THRIVE
  - Campus Wellness

73% of people who answered have not used these services

# Primary Stressors

1. Academics
2. Financial Strain
3. Interpersonal relationships
4. Self-image/identity
5. Communication/Language Barrier

In the past 3 months students have felt:

1. Anxiety- 75%
2. Depression-25%

# Communication Difficulties

1. Peers
2. Faculty
3. Health Care Provider
4. Clients/patients
5. Other
   a. Significant others/Family

# Dialectal Differences

9% of people self-identified as speaking another dialect.

- Southern American English- 1
- African American Vernacular English- 4
- American Sign Language- 1

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