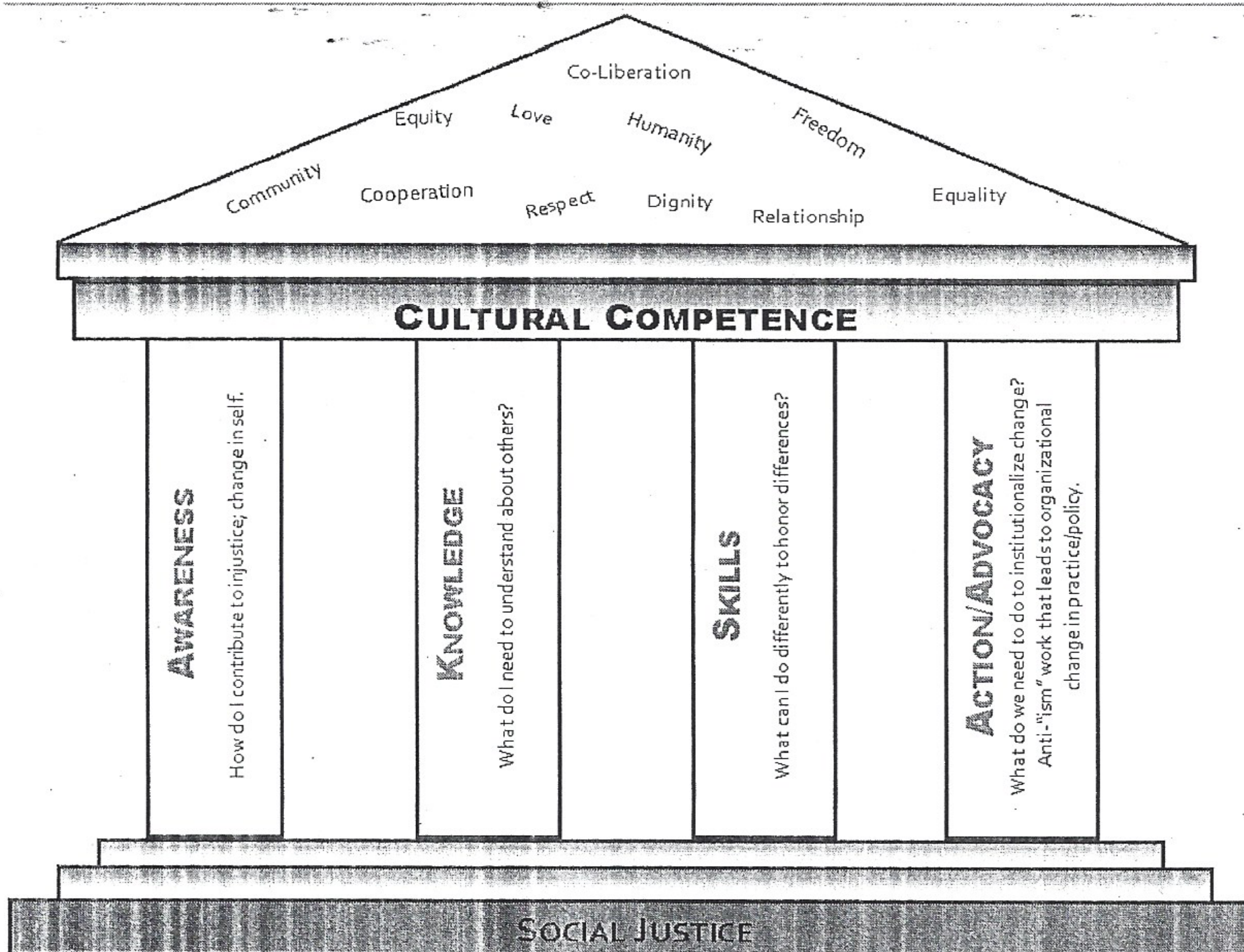


WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

(Adapted from Sue & Sue)



"A culturally competent professional is one who is actively in the process of becoming aware of his or her own assumptions about human behavior, values, biases, preconceived notions, personal limitations, and so forth.

Second, a culturally competent professional is one who actively attempts to understand the worldview of culturally diverse populations. In other words, what are the values, assumptions, practices, communication styles, group norms, biases, experiences, perspectives and so on, of culturally diverse students, families, communities and colleagues you interact with?

Third, a culturally competent professional is one who is in the process of actively developing and practicing appropriate, relevant, and sensitive strategies and skills in working with culturally diverse students, families, communities and colleagues.

Fourth, a culturally competent professional is one who advocates on behalf of the needs of students, families, community and colleagues. They take action in their workplace, community and society to create a culture of respect and equity.

Thus, cultural competence is active, developmental, an ongoing process and is aspirational rather than achieved."

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: AWARENESS

(Adapted from Sue & Sue)

1. *The culturally competent professional is one who has moved from being culturally unaware to being aware and sensitive to his or her own cultural heritage and to valuing and respecting differences.*
 - The professional has begun the process of exploring his/her values, standards and assumptions about human behavior.
 - Rather than being ethnocentric and believing in the superiority of his or her group's cultural heritage (arts, crafts, traditions, language), there is acceptance and respect for cultural differences.
 - Other cultures and sociodemographic groups are seen as equally valuable and legitimate.
2. *The culturally competent professional is aware of his or her own values and biases and how they may affect minorities.*
 - The professional actively and constantly attempts to avoid prejudices, unwarranted labeling, and stereotyping.
 - Culturally competent professionals try not to hold preconceived limitations and notions about culturally diverse people.
 - The professional actively challenges their assumptions; tries to find effective ways to work cross-culturally; and monitors their functioning via consultations, supervision, and professional development.
3. *Culturally competent professionals are comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and others in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, and other socio-demographic variables. Differences are not seen as negative.*
 - The culturally competent professional does not profess color blindness or negate the existence of differences in behavior, attitudes, cultural norms, beliefs, etc., among different groups.

4. *The culturally competent professional is sensitive to circumstances (personal biases; stage of racial, gender, and sexual orientation identity; sociopolitical influences, etc) that may dictate referral to a member of his or her own socio-demographic group or to another professional in general.*

- A culturally competent professional is aware of his or her limitations and is not threatened by the prospect of seeking assistance and support from others.

However...

- This principle should not be used as a cop-out for the professional who does not want to work with culturally diverse populations, or who do not want to work through their own personal hang-ups.

5. *The culturally competent professional acknowledges and is aware of his or her own racist, sexist, heterosexist, or other detrimental attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and feelings.*

- A culturally competent professional does not deny the fact that he/she/they has directly or indirectly benefited from individual, institutional, and cultural biases and that he/she/they has been socialized into such a society. As a result, the culturally competent professional inherits elements in the socialization process that may be detrimental to culturally and ethnically diverse populations.
- Culturally competent professionals accept responsibility for their own racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc., and attempts to deal with them in a non-defensive, guilt-free manner. They have begun the process of defining a new non-oppressive and non-exploitive attitude. In terms of racism, for example, addressing one's Whiteness (e.g., white privilege) is crucial for effective teaching.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: KNOWLEDGE

(Adapted from Sue & Sue)

1. *The culturally competent professional must possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group he/she/they is working with.*
 - The professional must be aware of the history, experiences, cultural values, and lifestyles of various socio-demographic groups in our society.
 - The professional understands the idea that the greater the depth of knowledge of one cultural group and the more knowledge the professional has of many groups, the more likely it is that he/she/they can be effective in his/her/their role.
 - Thus, the culturally competent professional is one who continues to explore and learn about issues related to various minority groups throughout his or her professional career.
2. *The culturally competent professional will have a good understanding of the sociopolitical system's operating in the United States with respect to treatment of marginalized groups in our society.*
 - The culturally competent professional understands the impact and operation of oppression (racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc.), the politics, and the racist, sexist, and homophobic concepts that have permeated institutions.
 - Especially valuable for the educator is an understanding of the role that ethnocentric monoculturalism plays in the development of identity and worldviews among minority groups.
3. *The culturally competent professional must have clear and explicit knowledge and understanding of the generic characteristics in individuals from diverse ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.*
 - These encompass language factors, culture-bound values, and class-bound values. The professional should understand the value assumptions (normality and abnormality) inherent in their institution and how they may interact with values of culturally diverse populations they serve.
 - In some cases, applying theories or models to a particular group, may limit the potential of persons from different cultures. Likewise, being able to determine those that may be useful to culturally and ethnically diverse individuals is important.
4. *The culturally competent professional is aware of institutional barriers that prevent some diverse groups from accessing services.*
 - Important factors include the location of services, the formality or informality of décor, advertising services and events in English only, where event are publicized, the availability of people of color, agency climate, hours and days of operation, transportation, childcare, and how services/events are viewed by some cultures.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: SKILLS

(Adapted from Sue & Sue)

1. *At the skills level, the culturally competent professional must be able to generate a wide variety of verbal and nonverbal responses.*
 - Mounting evidence indicates that different groups may not only define problems differently from their majority counterparts, but also respond differently to teaching styles.
 - Thus, the wider the repertoire of responses and pedagogy the educator possesses, the better educator he/she/they is likely to be.
 - We can no longer rely on a very narrow and limited number of skills in teaching. We need to practice and be comfortable with a multitude of teaching styles and modalities.
2. *The culturally competent professional must be able to send and receive both verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and appropriately.*
 - The culturally skilled professional must be able not only to communicate (send) his or her thoughts and feelings to diverse people, but also to read (receive) messages from diverse people (verbal and nonverbal messages).
 - Sending and receiving a message accurately means the ability to consider cultural cues operating within a setting.
 - Accuracy of communication must be tempered by its appropriateness. In many cultures, subtlety and indirectness are appreciated. Likewise, others appreciate directness and confrontation.
3. *The culturally competent professional is able to exercise a variety relationship building skills with their colleagues and the communities they serve when appropriate.*
 - This implies that teaching may involve out-of-classroom strategies including; attending special events, outreach, acting as a change agent, and home/community visits.
4. *The culturally competent professional is aware of his or her helping style, recognizes the limitations that they possess, and can anticipate the impact on culturally diverse colleagues and communities.*
 - When teaching-style adjustments appear too difficult, the next best thing to do may be to
 - a) acknowledge your limitations and consult with other professionals;
 - b) anticipate the impact your limitations have on others;
 - c) participate in Culturally Relevant Professional Development.
 - These things may communicate several things to your culturally diverse colleagues and communities: first that you are open and honest about your style of communication and the limitations or barriers they may potentially cause; second, that you understand enough about their worldview to anticipate how this may adversely affect them; third, that as a professional, it is important for you to communicate your desire to help despite your limitations; and fourth, that you care enough to do something about it.

Adapted from Sue, D.W., & Sue, D (2003). Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice, 4th Ed. New York: John Wiley.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: ADVOCACY/ACTION

(Adapted from Judith H. Katz)

Cultural Racism:

"These aspects of society that overtly and covertly attribute value and normality to white people and whiteness, and devalue, stereotype, and label people of color as "other", different, less than, or render them invisible."

Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, Adams, Bell & Griffin

Ways to combat racism:

- Educate co-workers and close friends about racism.
- Raise issues in your workplace with people in power, co-workers and staff.
- Change what normally appears on bulletin boards, walls, handouts, newsletters, and other materials relevant to race, ethnicity, and culture.
- Be a referral resource—direct individuals to people or groups who might be of assistance.
- Act as a role model, take risks and question the White power structure.
- Establish discussion groups and other activities in your workplace around race, ethnicity and culture e.g., book studies, films, journal articles, exercises, etc.
- Allocate and use resources in a way that promotes equity for those who have historically been marginalized.
- Assess the cultural environment of your workplace to ensure that it reflects and honors the diversity of those it serves (e.g., events, décor, number of staff of color).
- Seek out and actively participate in CRPD aimed to enhance your own awareness, knowledge and skills in effectively working cross-culturally.
- Examine policies within your organization to see if they meet the needs of diverse staff and communities.
- Openly disagree with racist comments, jokes or actions of those around you.
- Take the time to complain to those in charge when you notice racism inside and outside of your work place.
- Demonstrate a willingness to change self versus others as it relates to cultural norms, values, behaviors, and attitudes.
- Develop an "Equity Team" to include people in positions of power.
- Question the norms of meetings to ensure Equity.
- Review hiring policy and practices to include diversity beyond legal jargon.
- Review the mission and vision of your organization to include diversity.
- Make sure that your organizations evaluations and assessment tools take into consideration issues of racism, power, privilege, and oppression.
- Investigate curricula in your classroom for cultural relevance and anti-bias qualities.
- Align curriculum within your grade level and the school vs. independent teaching.
- Include diverse ethnic and socio-economic representation in decision making.
- Engage in conversations around race and social justice issues with colleagues and communities.

Adapted from Katz, J.H. (1978) White awareness: Handbook for anti-racism training.

Oklahoma Press.

Cultures Connecting, LLC

www.culturesconnecting.com

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Mitigating Implicit Bias and Stereotype Threat

"A quarter century ago, most psychologists believed that human behavior was primarily guided by conscious thoughts and feelings. Nowadays the majority will readily agree that much of human judgment and behavior is produced with little conscious thought."

– Mahzarin R. Banaji & Anthony G. Greenwald in *Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People*

Despite our best intentions, we all carry the biases we have been socialized to believe about different racialized groups, genders, people with disabilities, the elderly, and many others.

Following are some strategies you can do to mitigate your implicit bias.

1. **Acknowledge that you do have bias.** Bringing what's in your unconscious mind to a level of consciousness will increase the likelihood of your being able to make sure that it doesn't get in the way of your decision making. A "colorblind" mentality increases implicit bias because of the mental effort to suppress stereotypes.
2. **Cultivate knowledge of differences.** A "colorblind" mentality increases implicit bias because of the mental effort to suppress stereotypes.
3. **Openly discuss stereotypes:** Get comfortable with the discomfort of talking about the stereotypes you have of different groups to surface unconscious assumptions.
4. **Harvard Implicit Association Test.** Take an IAT on-line to deepen your understanding of where you have bias. <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
5. **Engage in mental perspective taking:** Put yourself in the other persons shoes by becoming genuinely curious about different norms, values, beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, etc.
6. **Priming:** Ask yourself questions to determine if the person reminds you of someone you know and if so, is it positive or negative? This helps to bring what's in the unconscious to a level of consciousness so that you can be intentional about not letting it get in the way of your decision making.
7. **Counter narratives:** Increase exposure to stigmatized groups and actively pursue counters to stereotypes. Practice thinking about messages or people that counter stereotypical roles.
8. **Avoid negative media:** Minimize the amount of negative media you allow yourself to be exposed to, particularly before making important decisions. It will make you less likely to stereotype.
9. **Establish agreements:** As an organization standardize processes e.g., hiring practices to ensure that everyone is following practices that are more likely to be effective.
10. **Don't rush:** Our biases are more likely to show up when we hurry or are experiencing stress.
11. **Remove distractions:** Identify and remove distractions or anything that may increase stress in the decision-making environment. For example, ask the interview team to turn off their phones and not look at any calls or emails between interviews.
12. **Snack:** Research shows that you are more likely to be more judgmental when hungry.

Moody, J. (2010) *Rising above Cognitive Errors: Improving Searches, Evaluations, and Decision Making*.
www.DiversityonCampus.com.

National Center for State Courts. (2012) "Strategies to Reduce the Influence of Implicit Bias." *Helping Courts Address Implicit Bias*. www.NCSC.org.