Being an ‘outsider’ on the ‘inside’

Working cross culturally: Lessons from Practice

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Overview

• Cultural competence - why is it important
• Capacity building – the invisible work
• Participatory Action Research
• Principles that underpin this work
• Lessons from practice
Culture:

“the integrated pattern of human behaviour that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group” (Cross et al, 1989)

Cultural competence:

“a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or amongst professionals and enables that system agency and professionals to work effectively in cross cultural situations” (Cross et al, 1989)
Cultural competence 2

Individual:

“The state of being capable of functioning effectively in the context of cultural differences” (Cross et al, 1989)

Organisational:

“A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enables this system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross cultural situations” (Cross et al, 1989)

Community:

“Communities strive to enhance awareness, strengthen accessibility and improve quality and effectiveness of available services and resources promoting continued health and well being” (Cross et al, 1989)
Cultural competence 3

- Found within the core competencies of the Australian Health Promotion Association (2009), NHMRC (2005)
- Reinforced by the values of Health Promotion such as social justice and equity
- Also the Galway Consensus Document (2008)

Competency is defined as ‘the ability to apply particular knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to the standard of performance required in specified contexts’ HP Forum 7, Issue 71 (AHPA, 2009)
• There are a range of models:

Source: A Cultural Competence Guide for Primary Health Care Professionals in Nova Scotia, 2005, p1

Source: Cross 1988
My story

- Began in NT in 1980
- Moved to Townsville in Queensland in 2007
- 12 Indigenous Researchers in 2007
- 16 Indigenous Researchers in 2010
Building Research Capacity

Core Principles of Working Cross Culturally

Communication
Relationships
Inclusiveness
Participatory
Engagement-working
& learning together
Connection
Respect-Trust
Capacity building
Spirituality
Empowerment
Two way learning
Partnerships
Reciprocity
Self determination

LOOK • ASK QUESTIONS • COLLECT INFORMATION • PLAN • ACTION
Principles

1. Relationships
2. Engagement – Working and learning together
3. Inclusiveness – Participatory
4. Reciprocity – Partnerships – Two way learning
5. Respect – Trust
6. Empowerment – Self Determination
7. Communication – Connection
8. Capacity building – Community Development
9. Spirituality - Philosophy
Lessons from Practice

• Examine your own values, behaviours, beliefs and assumptions

• Recognise racism and the institutions or behaviours that initiate and perpetuate racism

• Familiarise yourselves with the core cultural elements of the individuals/communities that you work with

• Develop a relationship of trust and respect by interacting with openness, understanding and a willingness to hear different perspectives and act on it
Lessons from Practice

• Apologise and acknowledge your mistakes
• Be flexible in your approach
• Listen deeply, observe closely, and don’t talk too much
• Learn, Inquire, avoid polarisation, avoid arguing and defending and show empathy and humility
How do I measure my success?

• Connection, respect and trust
  - Number of connections and the strengths and quality of those connections

• Direct experience in practice

• Practical application in relationships

• Effective engagement with the scholars

• Continued communication and requests for assistance, review of papers, suggestions
References

Australian Government. 2005 Cultural Competency in Health: A guide for policy, partnerships and participation, 9th December, NHMRC
Australian Health Promotion Association, 2009 Core competencies for Health Promotion Practitioners, AHPA


Brach, C., and Fraser, I. 2000 Can cultural competency Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities? A Review and Conceptual Model, Medical Care Research and Review: 57; 181-217

California Institute for Mental Health, 2008 Cultural Competency Check List. Sacramento California

