

Cultural Mindedness, Dialogue and Action Planning

Online Learning Activity # 1

Worksheet : Cultural-Mindedness, Part 1

Cultural-minded people in any given situation attend to the demeanor and behavior of the people with whom they interact. On another level, they are sensitive to the type of relations influenced by the organization's structure and relational processes, the organization's "climate."

The first step in becoming cultural-minded is to recognize cultural dynamics occurring in interactions. One conceptual tool that helps in this process are the Aspects of Culture—twelve categories of culture that can be applied to any situation to identify cultural dynamics that are happening. Importantly, each Aspect of Culture has accompanying beliefs, assumptions, and practices and each Aspect of Culture interrelates with the other Aspects.

Instructions

The following are the Aspects of Culture with a brief written explanation. After reading the Aspects of Culture, read the two case examples (below) and identify three Aspects of Culture that you think are happening in each case. Writing full sentences, post your discussion of the three Aspects of Culture for each case on the Discussion Forum. In addition, post your written discussion of the debrief questions (listed below after the case examples) on the Discussion Forum.

Grading Rubric (10 points possible)

1. The case analysis using the Aspects of Culture conceptual tool and debrief sections is written following the instructions fully and accurately (5 points).
2. The case analysis using the Aspects of Culture conceptual tool and debrief sections is written in complete and clearly articulated sentences/paragraphs. (5 Points)

ASPECTS OF CULTURE/ETHNICITY

The following categories are designed as a tool for cultural observation. The information can serve to guide decisions and actions in culturally diverse settings. Remember the principle of ongoing tentativeness: No one person represents the views and behavior of an entire group because everyone is a member of many groups (based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, income, education, religion, language, immigration status, and national origin). Moreover, behavior is concrete but ambiguous: The same action may have different meanings in different situations and therefore could lead to relational misunderstanding and conflict. It is important, therefore, to identify the context of behavior and to learn about the beliefs, assumptions, and customs related to the Aspects of Culture of each individual with whom we interact.

1. **History/Tradition:** Cultural traditions of a person or a group: When they came to the United States and the conditions of their immigration.
2. **Social Status Factors:** Education, occupation, income distribution of the group.
3. **Social Group Interaction Patterns:**
 - Intra-group:** Relations among members within a group. Relations are influenced by age, gender, color, sexuality, socioeconomic background, religion, education, dialect or language spoken and acculturation processes, which include culture shock.
 - Inter-group:** Relations between members of different groups. Are they cooperative and friendly or conflict ridden? Is there stereotyping and discrimination? What differences in political and economic influence and power exist? Social distance among groups is relevant here as an indication of degree of acceptance and interaction.
4. **Value orientations:** Cultural values form the deep subjective ideals and standards by which members of a culture (or ethnic group) judge their personal actions or those of others.
5. **Language and Communication:**
 - Verbal:** Language provides the verbal categories for perception of reality and for communication among humans.

Non-verbal: Tone of voice, gestures, facial expression, touching, body smell, and time orientation convey meaning directly without the use of words. Nonverbal communication is a potent factor in misunderstandings in culturally diverse settings.

6. Family Life Processes:

- Gender Roles
- Occupations
- Education (level of literacy)
- Marriage Customs
- Divorce Practice (is it practiced?)
- Parenting Beliefs and Practices
- Place of Residence (Ethnic Neighborhood?)
- Decision-making Style and Processes
- Learning Styles
- Status and Roles
- Naming and Labeling Practices (e.g., nicknames)

7. Healing Beliefs and Practices: The attitudes people have toward health, the body and the determinants of disease, their health care practices, and death beliefs and practices.

8. Religion: Spiritual beliefs and practices.

9. Art and Expressive Forms: The creative use of our imagination for interpreting, understanding and enjoying life. Includes visual, verbal and musical art.

10. Diet: Foods eaten by members of a group.

11. Recreation: Pastimes and activities of enjoyment and leisure.

12. Clothes: Type and extent of body coverings.

Case Example Analysis: Read the following two case examples and identify 3 Aspects of Culture you see in each case. Post your choice of the Aspects and a written explanation of your reasoning for selecting the 3 Aspects in the Discussion Forum. Be

sure to write the answers to the debrief questions as well, because they provide practice with self-reflection, an important skill for service providers.

Case Example # 1

A diversity issue that I have encountered is in my current line of work. I am a Mental Health Worker and the vast majority of individuals that we target are those who are underserved. I have encountered the majority of individuals to be Hispanic/Latinx. Some of the problems we have encountered in delivering services is resistance from the Hispanic/Latinx community because they assume that our division is from Social Services. The large misconception that these individuals have is that because they think we are with Social Services we want to take their children away or break up the family. So we are finding that we need to educate them and explain to them the purpose of our program. Another problem that we are facing is the cultural barrier in regards to the Hispanic/Latinx Community not wanting to accept mental health services because of the negative stigma attached to it.

Case Example # 2

I work as a Case Manager for a Health Managed Organization, and I witnessed a cultural situation at work with a couple of Nurses in the Pediatric Department.

One morning a mother of a child was very distraught about the symptoms her son was presenting and although the child was treated immediately by the Urgent Care Pediatric Department, the mother was Muslim and was practicing her religious beliefs in the room in which other mothers were caring for their sick children. One mother seemed to be bothered by this and expressed her concerns to one of the Nurses who roughly approached the Muslim mother by informing that she could not practice her religion in front of other mothers, as it was offensive.

Another Nurse intervened for the Muslim mother who did not agree with the first Nurse's approach and the Nurses had a mild altercation. The Muslim mother was also insulted by the Nurse who was not sensitive to her beliefs and the rough approach she used. Fortunately, the Department Administrator was able to defuse the situation and the Nurses were called in to the Department Administrator's office to address the matter.

Mikel Hogan, Ph.D., from Four Skills of Cultural Diversity Competence, Chapter 2, Cengage, 4th Edition, 2013

Case Analysis of Aspects of Culture:

Write three Aspects of Culture you think are relevant to each case.

Debrief Questions: Post in the Discussion Forum your answers to each debrief question

1. What did you learn about yourself from doing this activity?
2. What did you learn about others from doing this activity?
3. How can you apply what you learned to your internship this semester?