

Multicultural issues in human services essay sample

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In this case study I will explore certain possible dynamics related to culture and ethnicity that have been reported in relation to the psychology of Mexican Americans as well as other immigrant communities. Cristal is a 16-year-old Mexican American female. Cristal seems to be experiencing some distress in her life, which seems to stem from cultural conflict rather than inherent psychopathology. Cristal is struggling with the question of whether she should stay home and care for her mother and family or if she should go away to college. She feels that others don't understand her. This type of thought pattern is frequently observed within immigrant families, it is called, "intergenerational conflict between parents and children over retention of traditional values and ways as opposed to acculturation to "White European" American values", (Diller, 2011). CHARACTERISTICS

When working with Cristal I would expect to have some similar values as her although our cultures and backgrounds are different. Some similarities that I see us having are the desire of wanting to go away to college. When I was in high school I wanted to leave my family (not because I didn't love them) to gain independence that going away to college would allow me to do. I feel that Cristal has this same desire, however, her culture views that by her leaving she is leaving or abandoning her family. It is normal to have that desire when you are in high school. This is especially true for Cristal who was born in America, but has a family that holds on strong to their Mexican American roots. Cristal's desires have been strongly influenced by here growing up in America, by her peers, media, and the desire to take on typical American styles and values that normally conflict with traditional family values. The other way that I feel like I can relate with Cristal is that I, as well

as she, has a strong desire to want to please my family. I do not like to disappoint my family and will sometimes put my own desires aside if it means that the peace is kept. I feel that Cristal has these same feelings or she wouldn't be so conflicted on what to do. CHALLENGES

Some challenges that I could see having when working with this client is really understanding Mexican American culture or any culture for that matter that wouldn't encourage their child to gain independence and knowledge through furthering their education. Chin-Lien Chao states in her article that, "Previous research has indicated that there is a strong link between multicultural counseling competence and counselors' level of ethnic identity" (Chin-Lien Chao, 2012). This statement proves that the more you are on top of your game in multicultural counseling, the more you will gain an understanding of others differences. Some steps I could take in mitigating these limitations of not understanding the desire of Cristal's family is to pull them into the counseling sessions as well and really get an understanding of where they are coming from, what their desire's are for Cristal's future, and how willing they are to let her explore her opportunities. Another challenge that I could foresee would be a language barrier if Cristal's family was Spanish speaking. Cristal herself does not speak Spanish at all, however, her family does. LIMITATIONS AND BIASES

I am not sure that I would have persona I limitations or biases in this particular therapeutic process with Cristal. I would have a hard time as I previously stated is dealing with cultural differences other than my own, especially when an individual is attempting to better their life. In her article

Siegel states that, “ Incorporating components such as culturally framed trust building (such as pairing youths with mentors), stigma reduction, friendly milieus (such as serving culturally familiar foods and playing music popular with the culture), and services; and peer, family, and community involvement (including use of peer counselors and mentors, hosting parent weekends, and linking clients with senior center and community services) are recommended for improving cultural competence”, (Siegel, 2011). By incorporating some of these components into the way I practice and taking these components into mind could hopefully dissolve any limitations or biases that I may hold against any cultures. McBride also states the importance of being well versed in multicultural counseling by saying, “ Counselor educators should also encourage self-reflection of counselor trainees to challenge the biases and assumptions they may hold against minority groups, such as the geriatric population.

Self-awareness of biases and stereotypes is imperative when counseling diverse clients. This may be an uncomfortable process and, therefore, may cause some anxiety in both counselor trainees and counselor educators. As a result, some counseling programs may not emphasize self-reflection as much as they should. Therefore, greater emphasis needs to be placed on helping counselor trainees reflect on their own lives as well as preparing counselor educators to facilitate this difficult process. Immersion experiences and journaling may help to facilitate self-reflection by allowing students to challenge their biases and then journal about their anxieties, discomfort, and victories. Additionally, counselor educators should suggest counselor trainees seek counseling if troubles arise”, (McBride, 2012). There are going

to be limitations and biases anytime that you don't understand a culture that is different from our own. With the case of Cristal I would not see it as a limitation in the treatment process or a bias, I would see it more as not grasping an understanding as to what someone thinks is best for their child.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

For the case of Cristal the theoretical approach that I would take would be person centered therapy. The goal of Person Centered Therapy is to provide patients with an opportunity to develop a sense of self wherein they can realize how their attitudes, feelings and behavior are being negatively affected and make an effort to find their true positive potential. In this technique, therapists create a comfortable, non-judgmental environment by demonstrating genuineness, empathy, and unconditional positive regard toward their patients while using a non-directive approach. This aids patients in finding their own solutions to their problems. The reason that I would try to use this theory is because I would want to try and talk this out with Cristal and have her see through talking, that the attitudes that she has acquired through her culture do not necessarily have to dictate her life. I want to hear her say what she wants for her life and really have her understand that her wants are okay and that they are not wrong.

References

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