

# Diversity and psychotherapy



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Diversity and Psychotherapy Given that “ psychotherapists must learn to interact effectively with people from diverse cultures. As you probably know from other courses, each cultural group has its own ways of defining and understanding health, illness, and change, and people from those cultures may encounter difficulties in traditional psychotherapy because of these differences”, the essay aims to find a professional source of information (textbook, article, research study) that provides information about a particular culture, and discuss how one, as a therapist, would need to modify thinking or methods to conduct effective therapy with a client from this culture. To achieve the objective, the book entitled Culture and Psychotherapy: A Guide to Clinical Practice edited by Wen-Shing Tseng and Jon Streltzer published in 2001 is used for the discussion. Diversity and Psychotherapy The book written and edited by Tseng and Streltzer (2001) proffered diverse cases pertinent to culture and psychotherapy with the whole discourse categorized into five parts, to wit: an overview of the subject, five case presentations, special issues, treating special populations, special modes of therapy before delving into an integration and concluding portion. In the overview section, Tseng acknowledged the crucial importance of incorporating culture in psychotherapy (2001, 3). Knowledge of the patients’ cultural orientation encompasses awareness of the values, preferences, norms and traditions; particularly the influence of religion in their lives, as creating significant impact in the healing process. Gaw (2002), in his review of the book, cited ‘ The Woman Who Could Not Escape Her Spirit Song’, the third case which focused on “ a Coast Salish Indian woman with arthritis and depression was treated by psychiatrists who are familiar with the Native American culture. The psychiatrists then collaborated with a

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native healer and made use of an Indian " spirit song" healing ritual. The case illustrates how a native healing practice can enhance a Western psychotherapeutic approach and how reintegration of the Native American cultural identity can enhance healing in this group" (Gaw, 2002, par. 6). As therapists, one must work beyond traditional means and do the necessary research on the patient's cultural background, aside from demographic profile and the historical basis for the illness. Especially if the patient belongs to the older generation where religious values and traditions are deeply embedded in the patient's personality that healing would necessitate determining aspects from cultural traditions that could assist and facilitate the healing process. In contemporary setting, it would be helpful to seek relevant information on diversity in culture, especially those from the eastern culture, that affect the healing process to assist in according the appropriate psychiatric interventions and approaches, as required. References Gaw, A. C. (2002). Book Reviews: Culture and Psychotherapy: A Guide to Clinical Practice. Retrieved 09 June 2011. < <http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/full/53/2/218>> Tseng, W. S. and Streltzer, J. (2001). Culture and Psychotherapy: A Guide to Clinical Practice. American Psychiatric Press, Inc.