Cultural Awareness for Community Service Providers: Cultivating a Diverse Workforce

Presented by
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Our Purpose

➢ Have a basic understanding of who refugees are and why they come to the U.S.;

➢ Have a better understanding of concepts of culture that impact how we interact with the world and how these concepts contract with other communities and cultures;

➢ Gain culturally specific knowledge regarding religious observance, accessing services, and other general Human Resource topics.

❖ Safe Place
❖ Respect
❖ Have Fun
DIVERSITY
PROFESSIONAL
Welcome
As defined by Article 1 of the 1951 Refugee Convention:

“a person owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reason of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”

Who are Refugees?

- Had to leave their home.
- Had to leave their country.
- Treated badly because of who they are or what they believe (religion, race, opinions)
- Did not have a choice.
- Lived without a home for many years.
### Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Foreign Born Persons percent, 2006-2010</th>
<th>Language Other than English Spoken at Home 2006-2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York State</strong></td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York City</strong></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Albany</strong></td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Utica</strong></td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syracuse</strong></td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rochester</strong></td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buffalo</strong></td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Binghamton</strong></td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** 2013 US Census

**Source:** quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states
Additional Demographic Trends

- A large and growing Dominican population.
- A steady African American population
- The Asian population is the fastest growing demographic in the U.S.
  - Vietnamese = 4th largest
  - Cambodian = 8th largest
  - Hmong = 9th largest
  - Laotian = 11th largest
  - Burmese = 13th largest
  - Bhutanese = 19th largest

http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/04/04/asian-groups-in-the-u-s/
Our Neighbors

Arrivals in the last 10 years

• ~ 3,600 Burmese – Mostly the Karen Ethnic Group, but also Burmese Muslims (Rohigya) and Buddhists

• ~350 Bhutanese/Nepali
  • ~ 400 Iraqis
  • ~650 Africans (Sudan and Somalia)

Previous Populations
• ~ 4,500 Bosnian
• ~ 2,500 Russian (former Soviet Union)
• ~ 2,500 Vietnamese/Amerasian
Challenges/Opportunities: Accessing Services

- Language
- Culture
- Identity
- Role Reversal / Power Dynamics
- Educational Experience
- Long Range Planning / Choices
- Trust
- Trauma
Why does this matter to you and your organization?

• You care about your employees

• A place of welcome

• Companies are competing for your local workforce

• Corporations might institute testing requirements that could impact your workforce

• Safety & Compliance

• Customer Service
Why does this matter to you and your organization?

• Hidden Biases

• Communication (top 4 HR Competency)

• Most Important Bodies of Knowledge for HR Professionals in the Next 10 years
  ▪ Talent Management
  ▪ Change Management
  ▪ Workforce Planning & Employment
Where does the ketchup go?
What is the ketchup telling us?

- Our perceptions of what is “right” or “wrong”; “normal” or “strange”
- An assumption we have about “our world”
- To consider the reason for others behaviors, preferences and choices
Culture is the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that members of a society use to cope with their world, and with one another.

- These beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation.
- These beliefs are the guiding force behind behaviors and actions.
- Helps us to instantly categorize people as “like me” or “not like me”.
- Contains layers and layers of lessons and experiences.
What Are Some Components of Culture?

Clothing/Makeup/Hair
Behavior/Habits
Education
Law and Government
Gender Roles
Faith
Food
Literature
Cultural Competency

CULTURAL COMPETENCY IS A GROUP OF SKILLS, ATTITUDES, AND KNOWLEDGE THAT ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH DIVERSE ETHNIC/SOCIAL GROUPS

1. Awareness
2. Knowledge/Familiarity
3. Skills
4. Commitment
Cultural Humility

THE ABILITY TO MAINTAIN AN INTERPERSONAL STANCE THAT IS OTHER-ORIENTED (OR OPEN TO THE OTHER) IN RELATION TO ASPECTS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO THE PERSON

1. Lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self critique
2. Desire to fix power imbalances
3. Develop partnerships with people and groups who advocate for others
All people see the world not as it is but as they are.
Mercator’s Map
How do you view the world?
Peter’s Map
How do you view the world?
Cultural Concepts

Connection to Others (Group Orientation/Relationships)

Communication Styles & Language

Concepts of Time (Connection to the World Around You/Planning)
Discourse Patterns = how verbal information is organized

Direct

Indirect

Around the issue prior to making the point

Story Structures

Beginning

Plot

End

Part of an episode

直面问题

示例结构

开始

故事情节

结尾
Tips and Strategies: Communicating Cross Culturally

- Consider: The “English” we speak isn’t universal
- Avoid confusing language, assumptions, and idioms
- Speak clearly and more slowly
- Use simple words
- Avoid contractions – say Can Not instead of “can’t”
- If possible, try to avoid covering your mouth – let the person see you.
- Use more pictures
- Ask the person to repeat what they need to do
- Asking yes or no questions requires a direct response, which is difficult for cultures that communicate indirectly
What's in a Name?
What’s in a Name?

• U.S. naming traditions include a First, middle, last name

• In the U.S. the last name is a family name, and usually acquired from the father

• Karen people are given one name

• People f/r Burma might have several “names” & “nicknames”

• Nepali last names may be based on old “caste” structures

• Islam has many names that are the same as English names (ex. Abraham = Ibrahim, Maryam = Mary)
What’s in a baby Panda name?
Organizational Culture

CULTURAL COMPETENCY IS A GROUP OF SKILLS, ATTITUDES, AND KNOWLEDGE THAT ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH DIVERSE ETHNIC/SOCIAL GROUPS
Organizational Culture

**Organization Culture** is an institutions system of beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, policies and procedures that employees are expected to follow.

- These values can be “official” or “unofficial”.
- These values are expected to be the guiding force behind behaviors and actions.
- Different departments may have their own culture.
Cultural Scenarios

What is happening?

Why do you think this is happening?

What would you, as a professional, do in this situation?

What additional information would you like to know?

Is this cultural or personal?
Considerations/Strategies for the Multicultural Work Place

- Language (Assessment Tool) – Ask: What language do you speak? (not where are you from)
- Literacy Levels
- Health
- Explain behavior adjustments in the context of Organizational Culture
- Be aware of “old” and “new” employee cultures
- Testing Requirements
- Cafeteria/Food
- Coffee/Tea Time
Diversity is…

• More than being from a different country or speaking a different language

• More than race or ethnicity

• Shared, beliefs, values & customs
  – Urban or Rural
  – Millennial or Baby Boomer
  – Socio Economic Status
“Within two generations [they] had largely caught up to the native population in terms of income and poverty level. Yet their financial success masked their cultural unease, and if my grandparents caught up economically, I wonder if they ever truly assimilated. They always had one foot in the new life and one foot in the old one. They slowly acquired a small number of friends but remained strongly rooted in their Kentucky... They ate domesticated animals and had little use for ‘critters’ that weren’t for eating, yet they eventually relented to the children’s demands for dogs and cats.”
If Something is Different, Does it Make it Wrong?
Conclusions

➢ We bring our own personal “culture”- norms, behaviors, ideas about the world – with us into all our interactions, personal and professional

➢ Our life long learners bring their personal cultures with them to each interaction

➢ Other “cultures” use other language patterns, have their own concepts of time, and view relationships differently

➢ Be Welcoming, have cultural humility, and build skills together
Upcoming Events

• World Refugee Day
  Saturday, June 17th
  12-4pm in Utica Hanna Park.
  Enjoy music, dance performances, local ethnic food, and more!

• “Lunch and Listen” Tuesday, June 20th
  12-1pm at MVRCR, Iraqi violinist Imad Al Taha will be performing. Bring a lunch and enjoy an hour of incredible music!
MVRCR Social Media

• Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees (youtube)
• @MVRCR (Facebook)
• @M_V_R_C_R (Twitter)
• MVRC_refugees (Instagram)
Thank You

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