Eliot Community Human Services, Inc.
Introduction to Culture Brokering

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Today We Will:

- Understand the culture brokering model
- Reflect on how one’s own culture and belief system may influence relationships with individuals and organizations
- Learn about the role of, skills and characteristics of a culture broker
Culture Brokering

The act of bridging, linking or mediating between groups or persons of differing cultural systems to reduce conflict or produce change
Culture Broker:

• Functions as a “cultural bridge” between diverse communities and mainstream service systems

• Understands how a diverse community’s culture differs from the mainstream service system’s culture

• Can explain nuances & values of one culture to the other culture.

• Tolerates different views, values & beliefs
WHO ARE WE TODAY?

Massachusetts:
• In 2010, 15.0 percent of Massachusetts' total population were foreign-born (12.2 percent in 2000 and 9.5 percent in 1990).

• 24.4 percent of the foreign-born population were Asian, 14.9 percent were black or African American, 45.4 percent were white and 21.0 reported Hispanic or Latino origins.

• 15.3 percent of the foreign-born population lived below the poverty threshold (compared to 10.8 % of native born).

• foreign born in Massachusetts with a college degree increased by 51.4 percent between 2000 and 2010.
# The Way We Look at our World

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More Ways We Interpret Our Worldview

ACTIVITY ORIENTATION

**DOING**
- Clocks, appointments, schedules
- Activity is evaluated by a product
- Problem-solution
- World can be changed

**BEING**
- Life is relaxed, less hectic
- Activity is not measured by external, observable products
- Accept the world as it is
What is the “culture” of Eliot Community Human Services?
An exercise in self-awareness ~

“The first thing you have to know is yourself. A man who knows himself can step outside himself and watch his own reactions like an observer.”

— Adam Smith, The Money Game
Somali Immigrants
• Allah determines whether or not a child will be “disabled”, & this cannot be predicted or altered

Asian
• individuals with traditional beliefs may perceive a disability as evidence for transgressions committed in a previous life
• disability caused by violating certain taboos include looking at certain animals, knitting, using scissors, & attending a funeral

Number of African Societies
• believe in God as a supreme being & believe all people are "God's children," including those with disabilities.
• individuals with disabilities are valued members of the family
• others believe that witchcraft is strongly linked to chronic illness & disability

Some Native American Communities
• disability was “meant to be” so attempts to “fix” the person may upset the balance, which includes his or her contribution to the group; individual is not seen as deficient; instead, contributes to the community in his/her own way regardless of disability.
Disability:

1. How is it defined?

2. How is the cause explained?

3. How is it responded to?

4. What should be done about it?
Culture Brokering Model

INTERVENING CONDITIONS
Type of Disability
Communication
Age
Culture Sensitivity
Time
Cultural background
Gender
Power/powerlessness
Economics
Bureaucracy
Politics
Network
Stigma

STAGE 1
PERCEPTION
• Perception of the need for brokering
• Conflict, breakdowns

PROBLEMS
• Barriers to access and utilization
• Breakdowns in connections

STAGE 2
INTERVENTION
• Establishing trust and rapport
• Maintaining connections
STRATEGIES
Linking through:
• Advocating
• Negotiating
• Intervening
• Sensitizing
• Networking
• Innovating
• Mediating

STAGE 3
OUTCOME
• Establishing connections between consumers and the rehabilitation system
• Maintaining facilitation across systems
RESOLUTION

LACK OF RESOLUTION
• Continued breakdown
An Application of the Culture Brokering Model Adapted for Rehabilitation

Intervening Conditions

• Daughter is labeled “mentally retarded” by service system
• Fear that government will take daughter away and place her in a hospital
• Family is poor and parents speak only Spanish
• Family wants to care for daughter and does not want her to “volunteer”
• No bilingual/bicultural counselors or staff
• Service system can offer “flexible funding”
• Program is committed to diversity

STAGE 1
Perception – Problems
Family, daughter and team decide this young woman will try a volunteer position.
Daughter fails to respond to follow-up meeting for the application process.

STAGE 2
Intervention – Strategies
Staff & counselor identifies intervening conditions & employs the following:
- Bilingual/bicultural counselor transferred from another office
- Sensitivity training conducted within program
- Information on disability & volunteerism disseminated to Latino community
- Counselor introduces this family to other volunteers with disabilities and their families from the Latino community
- Flexible funding used to fund attendance at conferences

STAGE 3
Outcome Resolution
• Daughter volunteers, with supports, with children in a Latino FBCO
• Parents participate in a family support network
Or
• Lack of resolution
- Parents ignore requests for meeting

Staying Connected
Intervening Conditions

Disability
Communication
Age
Culture Sensitivity
Time
Cultural Background
Gender
Power/Powerlessness
Economics
Bureaucracy
Politics
Networks
Stigma
Stage 1

Perception
Perception of the need for brokering
Conflict, breakdowns

Problems
Barriers to access and utilization
Breakdowns in connections
Stage 2

Intervention
Establishing trust and rapport
Maintaining connections

Strategies
Linking through:
advocating
negotiating
intervening
sensitizing
networking
innovating
mediating
educating
Intervention Strategies

Advocating

Advocates define & plead the cause of, promotes the rights of, or changes the system on behalf of an individual or group

The redistribution of power and resources to the individual or group that has demonstrated a need

The act of informing and supporting a consumer so that she or he can make decisions that serve his/her needs
Intervention Strategies

**Mediating:**

More appropriate when conflict occurs and a go-between, an intermediary, is needed to resolve or minimize, and in some instances prevent conflicts between individuals and the service system.
Intervention Strategies

Networking

A networker establishes links with other professionals who can provide services to the person

Serves as a source of power for the service provider in facilitating services to culturally diverse individuals

Facilitate access and use of services
**Intervention Strategies**

**Negotiating**

Strategy used to reach an agreement. Involves conferring with the individual in order to come to terms with his/her perception of the need for specific services

Empowers the individual because in order to negotiate, the provider has to understand the perspective of the person.
Intervention Strategies

**Sensitizing:**
To make aware of the attitudes and feelings of others

To be affected or changed by various agents

Calling for care or caution in service delivery
Intervention Strategies

Innovating:

To initiate or make a change by introducing or using a new idea, method or device
Intervention Strategies

Intervening:
Compel, alter or prevent an action or condition

Come between so as to prevent or amend
Stage 3

Outcome:

Resolution

Established connections between individuals and the service system
Maintaining facilitation across systems

OR

Lack of Resolution

Continued breakdown/conflict
Attributes of a Culture Broker

A willingness to be a risk taker

Able to tolerate ambiguous roles

Comfortable functioning at the margins of various systems (the person’s cultural system and the service delivery system.)

Good communication skills
Attributes of a Culture Broker

The ability to network

Effective problem solving skills

Flexibility and a willingness to learn and perfect the culture brokering role
Culture Brokering Model Worksheet

Intervening Conditions

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

STAGE 1 – Conflict

STAGE 2 – INTERVENTION

STAGE 3 – OUTCOME

LACK OF RESOLUTION
An Application of the Culture Brokering Model Adapted for Rehabilitation

Intervening Conditions

Staying Connected

STAGE 1
Perception – Problems

STAGE 2
Intervention – Strategies

STAGE 3
Outcome

Resolution

Or

Lack of Resolution
Report Back Process

- Briefly summarize your scenario
- What are the conflicts/problems (2 or 3)?
- List a few intervening conditions (positive / negative)
- What are the strategies?
- What’s the outcome?
In conclusion…

- Any aha moments?
- What can you do “tomorrow”?

Thank you!
Thank You!

For further information, please feel free to contact us:

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For further reading and resources, please see:
www.serviceandinclusion.org/culturebrokeraging/
www.serviceandinclusion.org
http://InclusiveEvents.org/
https://www.nationalserviceresources.org/expert-sotnik-inclusion
http://www.communityinclusion.org/staff.php?staff_id=38
http://cirrie.buffalo.edu/culture/monographs/cb.php