

Basic Principles of Cultural Competence

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Definition Of Cultural Competency

“a set of attitudes, behaviors and policies that ensure a system, agency, program or individual can function effectively and appropriately in diverse cultural settings.”



Basic Principles of Cultural Competence

- **Multiple Perspectives**
- **Culture Is Something Everybody Has**
- **Building Cultural Bridges**
- **Head – Heart – Hands – Healing**
- **Co-Responsibility**



**Multiple Perspectives:
more than one way to
interpret what we see.**

- Cultural filters

- **Limit the range of our perceptions, attitudes and assumptions**

- **Attitudes and assumptions support the way we perceive the world**

- automatic responses

- sense of meaning



Culture is Something Everybody Has

Cultural Competence:

- **Is for all people**
- **Is an inclusive approach**
- **Helps each person understand and respect one's own culture**
- **Transfers this understanding and respect to other cultures**
- **Is the beginning of self-respect and acceptance of diversity**



Culture Is Something Everybody Has

Begin any multicultural or cross-cultural approach with **SELF**

- **What is culture to me?**

Definition of Culture: Culture is the sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguish one group of people from another. Culture is transmitted, through language, material objects, rituals, institutions, and art from one generation to the next.



Characteristics of Culture:

- **Culture is learned.**
- **Culture is shared.**
- **Culture is an adaptation-developed to accommodate to environmental conditions.**
- **Culture is a dynamic system that changes continuously.**

Ten Elements of Culture

Definition of Culture: *Learned behaviors, traditions, beliefs, and a way of life created by a group of people.*

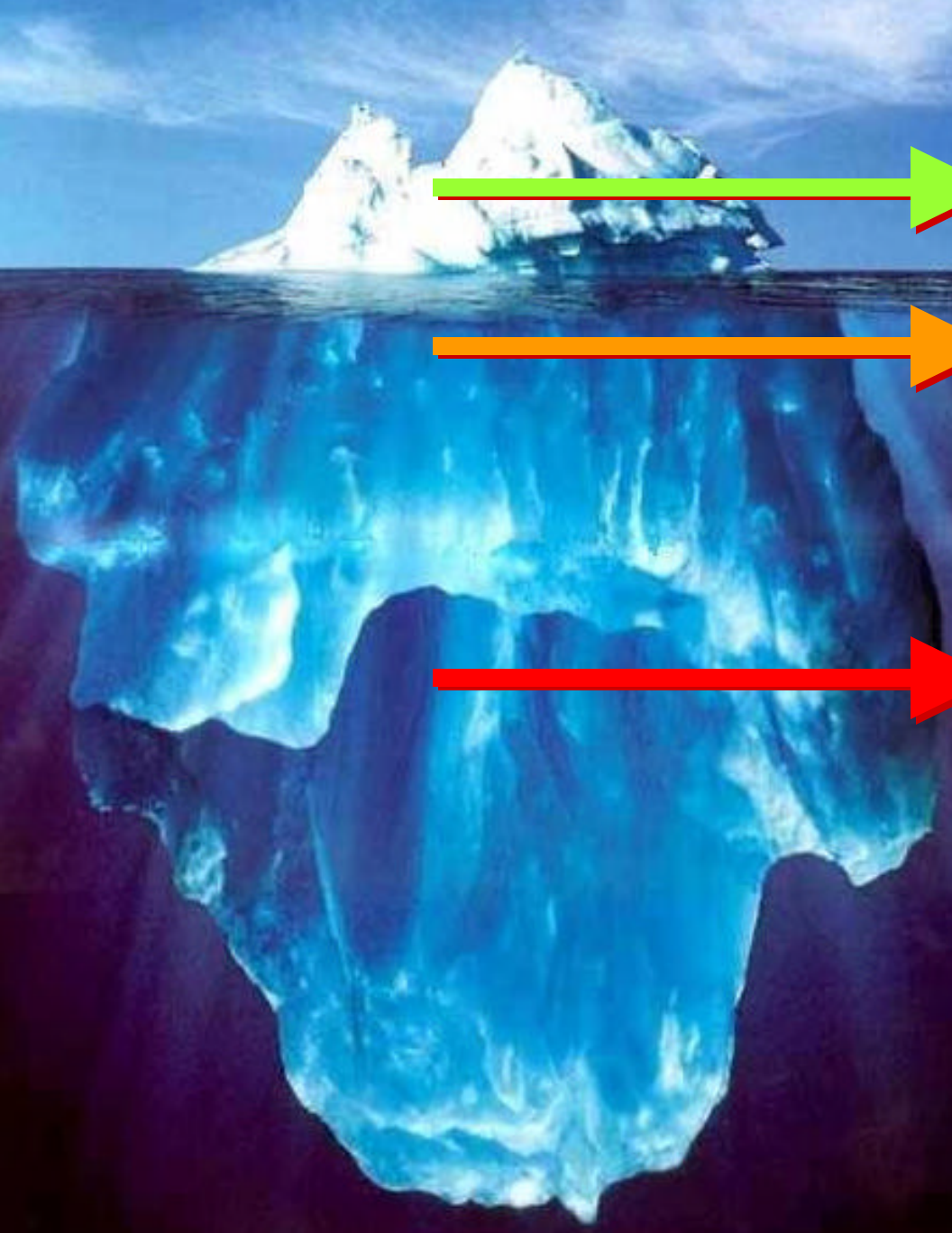
- 1. Values and Beliefs**
- 2. Communication Patterns
(Language/Dialect)**
- 3. Social Relationships**
- 4. Diet and Food Preparation**
- 5. Dress and Other Body Decoration**
- 6. Religion and Religious Practices**
- 7. Family (Structure)**
- 8. Traditions and Customs**
- 9. View of Time**
- 10. Recreation/Leisure**





Culture
is like an
Iceberg.

6/7th's of it is
UNDER the
water.



BEHAVIOR

BELIEFS

VALUES AND

THOUGHT

PATTERNS



Objective Culture

**-understanding the arts,
literature, history, political
structures, social systems,
etc...of various cultures.**



Subjective Culture

**-understanding values,
beliefs, patterns of thinking,
behaving, communication
styles and etc.**



Cultural Definition of Diversity

The cultural approach to ethnicity implies that everyone has an ethnic heritage of some kind, including “whites”.



Generalization vs. Stereotype

Cultural Generalization

- Never applies to everyone in every situation
- Only a first “guess”
- Discard it when no longer accurate or useful

Cultural Stereotype

- Applies to everyone in every situation – no exceptions
- Retained even when no longer accurate or useful



Path of Intercultural Learning

- **(Ethnocentrism)** “Our way is the only rightway.”
- **(Awareness)** “Wait a minute, there may be another way.”
- **(Understanding)** “Oh, you mean there are reasons why people respond differently?”
- **(Acceptance/Respect)** “It’s OK to be different. Differences are to be recognized and acknowledged.”



- **(Appreciation/Valuing)** “Diversity can enhance our lives and even be fun.”
- **(Selective Adoption)** “People can pick and choose what they like best from each culture.”
- **(Multiculturation)** “We’re no longer the melting pot; let’s go for the kaleidoscope.”



Building Cultural Bridges

MULTIETHNIC - BORN

MULTICULTURAL - LEARNED

GLOBAL - INTERNATIONAL



Building Cultural Bridges

- **In the next decade:**

- **one in three Americans will be non-white**

- **Hispanics will become the largest non-white ethnic group in America**

- **Further evidence is exemplified in the current San Jose, CA, telephone directory, in which the Vietnamese surname 'Nguyen' outnumbers the surname 'Jones' 14 columns to 8.**



- **Unemployment rate for Native American tribal members is between 40% and 80%, compared to a 5% unemployment rate for the US as a whole.**
- **In 1990, 24% of the US population was considered rural and 7% of Americans lived on farms. Of these, roughly 40% fell below the poverty level.**
- **Hispanics are less likely than other racial groups in the country to complete high school.**



- **Black and Hispanic youth are suspended from schools at a rate three times that of their white counterparts.**
- **The national dropout rate for all students averages 17%-19%, but it has been as high as 49.6% among African-American youth in the last decade.**
- **Only 45% of children in rural schools finish high school, compared to 65% of children in urban schools.**



Head-Heart-Hands-Healing

Cultural Competence

Needs to be taught at three levels:

Factual information (head)

+

Attitudes and Feelings (heart)

+

Activities and Actions (hands)

+

for the Healing Process to begin.

Co-responsibility



Means speaking out for social justice



Is moving beyond our narrow self-interests



**Embraces community-building and
stewardship for others**



Shares in the problem-solving responsibility



Focuses on systemic change

...Social action is the outcome!

