NATIONAL CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY
WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

Love is an Action Verb:
Strengthening Programs through Cultural Competency

Training Activities

Webinar, January 19, 2017

The Iceberg Exercise

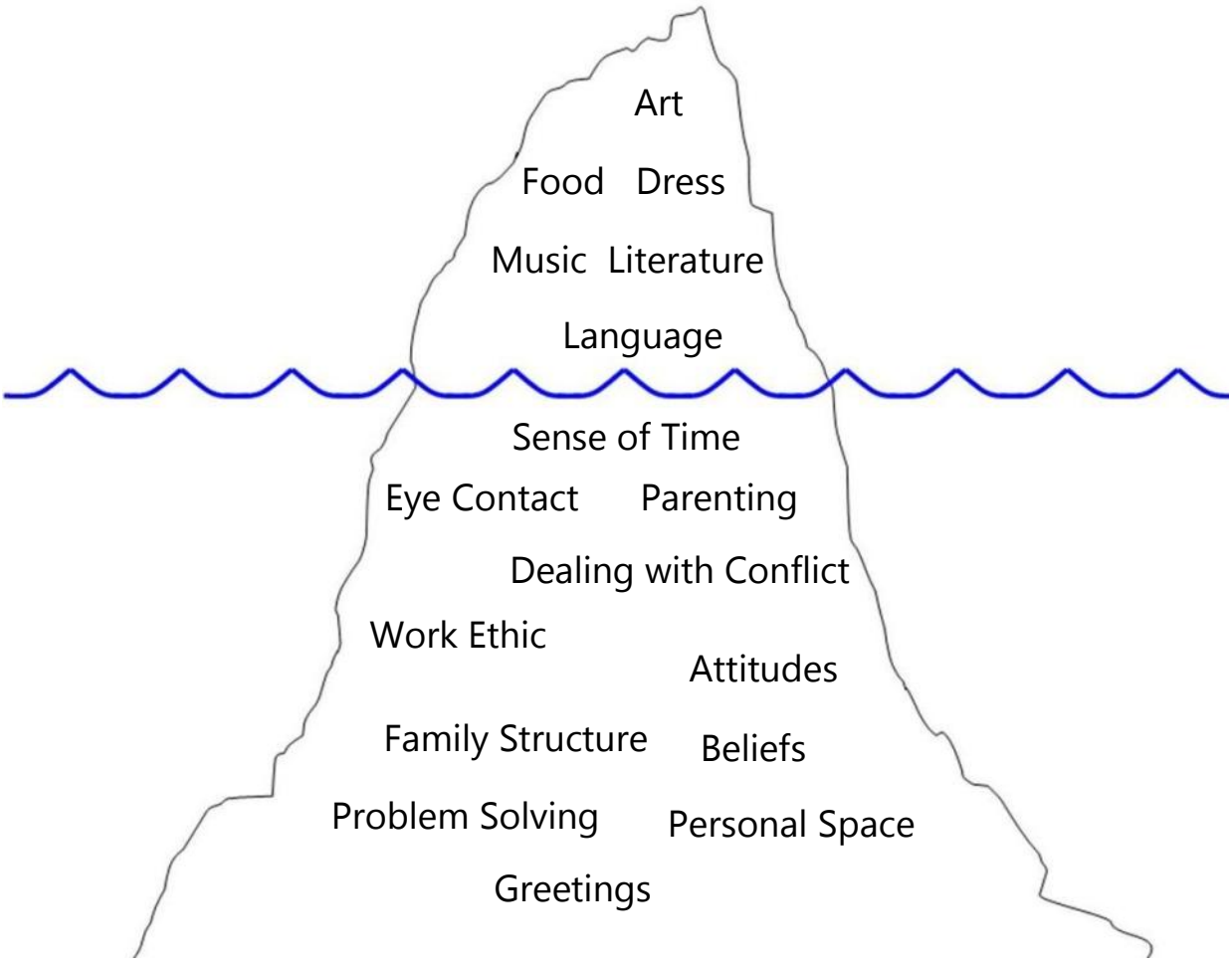
Overview: There are many layers to a culture, some easily observed and others less known. It is the 'underwater' characteristics that often lead to misunderstandings.

Directions:

Part 1. Draw the outline of an iceberg on a large poster size paper or whiteboard. Ask participants what they think about their culture, and to name different aspects of it. Get them started by writing "food" and "music." Most likely, they will name things that appear at the "tip" of the ice berg (such as how we dress, national dishes, what music we have in our folklore, etc.). Then you can start discussing the iceberg model and show all the "hidden" dimensions of a culture.

Part 2. Now, ask participants to be specific in regard to their own culture: What kind of dress? What is typical 'personal space?" When is eye contact uncomfortable?

Part 3. Ask participants to analyze in the same way other cultures they may come in contact with. Encourage them to explore such things as parenting style or dealing with conflict if they work with parents, for example.



Summary: The goal is to examine how differences in cultures are not necessarily 'good' or 'bad,' but just different. Understanding the non-tangible, hidden aspects of a particular culture allow us to more deeply realize the complexities of what holds true meaning and importance to an individual and/or culture. Understanding this can alleviate most miscommunication and strengthen programs.

The Hidden Rules of Economic Classes

Directions: Place a check mark before all the statements that reflect your current skills or status. Can you survive in poverty?

Can You Survive in Poverty?

1. I know which churches and neighborhoods have the best tag sales.
2. I know when Walmart and drug stores throw away over-the-counter medicine with expired dates.
3. I know how to fight and defend myself physically.
4. I know how to get a gun, even if I have a police record.
5. I know how to keep my clothes from being stolen at the laundromat.
6. I can live without a checking or savings account and don't have credit cards.
7. I know how to live without electricity.
8. I know how to use a knife as scissors.
9. I can entertain a group of friends with only my personality and my stories.
10. I know which churches will provide help with food or shelter.
11. I know how to pack all my belongings and move in half a day.
12. I know how to get and use food stamps.
13. I can find and use free medical clinics
14. I am very good at trading and bartering.
15. I know the city bus schedule.

Can You Survive in Middle Class?

1. I know how to get my children into sports or arts classes.
2. My children wear brand name clothing.
3. I know how to order in a nice restaurant.
4. I know how to use a credit card, checking and savings accounts.
5. I understand life and home insurance and have a medical insurance policy.
6. I talk to my children about college.
7. I know how to get a library card.
8. I have a mortgage or own my home.
9. I know how to help my children with homework and meet with teachers.
10. I know how to decorate my house for the different holidays.
11. I know how to use most of the tools and lawn equipment in the garage.
12. I repair items in my house almost immediately when they break—or know a repair service and call it.
13. We have more than one computer in our home.
14. I know how to set a table.
15. I take a vacation at least once a year and often plan weekend excursions.

Can You Survive in Wealth?

1. I can read a menu in several languages.
2. I have several favorite restaurants in different countries of the world.
3. During the holidays, I know how to hire a decorator to make my home festive.
4. I have a preferred financial adviser, legal firm, CPA firm, designer, florist, caterer, personal trainer and tailor.
5. I have at least two residences that are staffed and maintained.
6. I know how to ensure confidentiality and loyalty from my domestic staff.
7. I belong to at least four private clubs (country club, yacht club, etc.).
8. I fly in my own plane or company plane.
9. I know how to ensure enrollment of my children in the preferred private schools and colleges.
10. I know how to host grand dinner parties.
11. I am on the boards of at least two well known charities.
12. I support the work of a particular artist.
13. I have the provenance for all original art, jewelry and antiques.
14. I have worldwide coverage on my cell phone.
15. I own more vehicles than there are drivers in my family.

What Would I Want Them to Know?

Overview: Often, volunteers react to clients on a surface level, responding to behaviors and attitudes without delving into the reason for them. This can lead to misunderstandings, miscommunication and failed programs.

Directions: Ask participants to do the following:

Step 1. Individually answer the question, "If I were a Christ Child Society client (or parent of a child they serve), what 5 specific and important things might I want the volunteers to know about what happens in my life?" Start with suggestions such as, "we have moved 3 times in the last year" or "my parents don't speak English." Encourage them to think back on actual people they served.

Step 2**.** Then, break up into small groups. Share the answers with each other while someone records the following:

- What issues are mentioned repeatedly?
- How could these issues impact the volunteers' attitudes toward the clients or children?
- Which of these issues are most likely related to cultural characteristics, including the culture of poverty.

Step 3. Return to large group and brainstorm about how CCS programs could be improved in light of this discussion. Chapter leaders then take these suggestions into consideration when evaluating the program.

Alternate Directions : If assembling volunteers for this exercise is difficult, consider asking volunteers who work on a specific project to conduct this exercise via email.

Step 1. Email the first question and prompts to all. Answers can be sent to the organizer who compiles the common ones and emails the list back to all.

Step 2. Organizer compiles a list of the most common issues and highlights those that are based on cultural differences. She emails this to all participants.

Step 3**.** Each participant then shares with everyone (reply all) suggestions for how the program can incorporate an understanding of these issues going forward. Chapter leaders then take these suggestions into consideration when evaluating the program.

Summary: This challenges the group to remember that we are not the only ones who bring our cultural characteristics to our daily life. We view the world through our cultural prism which colors our overall viewpoints, so it is important to have insights into the lives of clients or to ask about them when providing services.

First Impressions and Trading Places Exercise

Overview: This activity helps one to gain an understanding of his or her own biases and stereotypes. Biases and stereotypes are part of human nature that should be explored and understood.

Directions: Chapter members are placed in groups of 4 and asked to complete the following activity

- Step 1. Given a sheet of paper with 4 brief descriptions
  Asked to rank each 1 to 4 of who they would trade places (Step 1).
- Step 2. Given a second group of descriptions
  Asked to re-rank given the new information
- Step 3. Given a third group of descriptions
  Again asked to re-rank given the Additional information

Trading Places: Step 1

____ 12 year old child piano prodigy
_____Black female who is pregnant with her 4th child
____ 61 year old Caucasian male aerospace engineer.
____ 45 year old Latino male auto worker

Trading Places: Step 2

_____A 12 year old child piano prodigy
Played at Carnegie Hall at the age of 7
_____Black female who is pregnant with her 4th child
Husband recently died in Afghanistan as a Captain in US Army
_____ Sixty- one year old Caucasian male aerospace manager
Recently divorced with 2 granddaughters
_____A 45 year old Latino male auto worker
Married with 2 children

Trading Places: Step 3

_____A 12 year old child piano prodigy
Played at Carnegie Hall at the age of 7
Contracted HIV at the age of 5 from a tainted blood transfusion
_____Black female who is pregnant with her 4th child
Husband recently died in Afghanistan as a Captain in US Army
Nuclear physicist and graduate of MIT
_____ Sixty- one year old Caucasian male aerospace manager
Recently divorced with 2 granddaughters
Recently arrested for child molestation
_____A 45 year old Latino male auto worker
Married with 2 children
Recently won $25 million in Powerball lottery and is quitting work

Summary: 1st impressions seldom provide enough information to form an accurate judgment. We usually do not know a person well enough to understand them on the first encounter.

Courtesy of American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy: Cultural Sensitivity Training

First Impressions

Goal: To explore the unconscious judgments we make about a person at first glance.

Directions: Match the description on the right with the person on the left

Summary: An eye-opener to the inaccuracy of first impressions.

_____**1. L. Spore**
Born and raised in Brooklyn, Mother of 3
Coordinator of a community outreach program
in the Bronx.

_____**2. M. Johnson**
Doctorate in plasma physics from
Dartmouth and Masters in Electrical
Engineering from Purdue

_____**3. O. Jefferson**
Lives in this house



_____**4. A. Peters**
Lives in this house.



_____**5. A. Rafael**
Born in Kansas, studied at Boston College;
Headmaster at East Coast prep school

_____**6. C. Wallace**
Former prom queen and cheerleader
Homeless since divorce in 2003

A.



B.



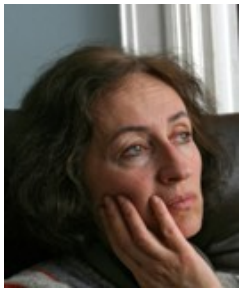
C.



D



E



F



Answers: 1-E 2-B 3-D 4-A 5-F 6-C

Cultural Generalization Activity

Overview:
This activity will examine the concept of culture by exploring the differences between a Cultural Generalization (observation) and a Cultural Stereotype (judgment). Participants will learn to differentiate between observations and judgment and how they apply to culture. This will also help participants see how they might be viewed by others through the lenses of these generalization and stereotypes.

Directions: Post a picture of a cultural stereotype (see second page) or any picture of your own) that will easily evoke judgment from the participants.

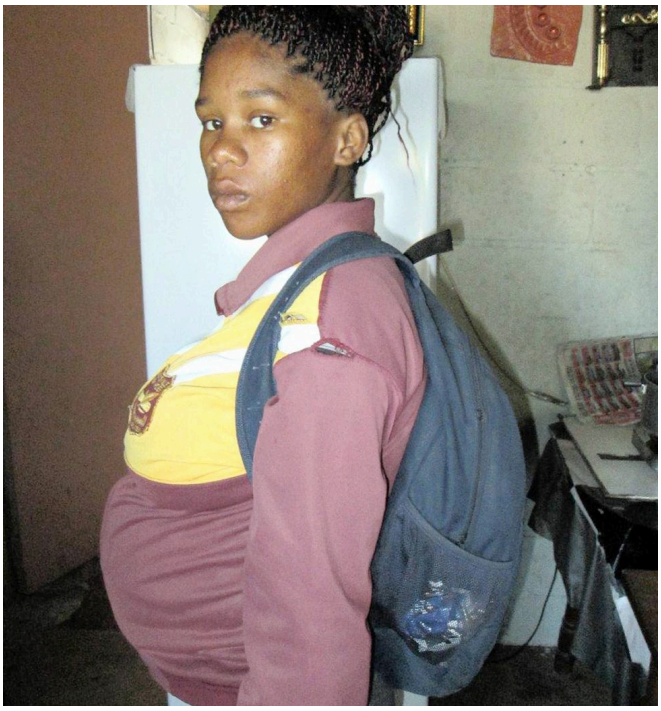
- Ask participants to brainstorm characteristics of the pictured subgroup. For example, "How would you describe Asians/poor people/single mothers…?"
- The facilitator will write down all comments on a blackboard or poster board. The point is to create a list of what they automatically think about the designated group. Gather about 12-15 terms.
- Looking at the list, ask the participants to put themselves "in the shoes" of the chosen subgroup being discussed. How do they feel about their brainstorming results? They will likely come to the conclusion that the subgroup would agree with some characteristics while objecting to others.
- Ask the participants to explain the difference between observations (statements about others informed primarily by your empirical senses) and judgments (statements about others informed primarily by your interpretations). How is the observation that, "She is wearing a brown coat" differ from "She is slovenly?" (Point out that judgments are not necessarily negative. We frequently do make positive judgments about other groups.)

Summary: Many of the characteristics on the board will be judgments, which is a result of our natural inclination to make judgments. We interpret through our own cultural lenses what we see as an outsider to another group. We may have a positive or negative reaction to "otherness," but humans tend to veer toward making judgments rather than observations. This exercise points out that, when interacting with another culture, judgment is a very typical reaction but we should avoid negative judgments that arise from stereotypes.

Picture Samples











Birth Order & Stereotyping Exercise

Overview: This exercise introduces participants to the early effects of stereotyping on personality and character. Participants will explore how we form beliefs about how people are different from each other, starting with how we view birth order.

Directions:

1. Separate into 3 groups based on birth order (first born, middle and last born). In each group, talk about what it was like for participants to be in their birth order. What were the positives and negatives? This part builds a sense of "*Us*."

2. Each group then lists the positives and negatives they feel exist for the *other* two birth orders, "*Them*." Prompt discussion with "all first born people are…" Or, all middle children are…"
(The lists will most likely draw out stereotypes like the youngest are spoiled, or the middle child is ignored.)

3. Share the lists aloud with the whole group.

4. Discuss how it felt to hear some of the stereotypes about themselves (most will not feel the stereotypes are fair). How many characteristics are true for each participant? How did those stereotypes influence one's own sense of self? How did they influence how siblings and parents treated the participant?

Summary: Stereotyping by birth order is common and begins at an early age. Unless we challenge the stereotypes, they can come to define us.
The same is true for ethnic, racial and cultural stereotypes. Racial, religious, cultural, etc. attitudes are formed through exposure to conversations, experiences, attitudes and assumptions in our families, communities, schools and society in general. Unless we challenge them, test them out, or expose the fragility of their basis they become ingrained in our world view.

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