

# Preparing to Serve: Online Training Modules



**MASSEN, A. AND KOWALEWSKI, B. (EDS.)**  
**COPYRIGHT © 2010. WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY**  
***PREPARING TO SERVE: ONLINE TRAINING MODULES***  
**PROFESSIONALISM**  
**CULTURAL SENSITIVITY**  
**ETHICS**  
**INTRODUCTION TO TUTORING AND MENTORING**  
**MENTORING**  
**TUTORING**  
**PRE-COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE**  
**FERPA**

**[HTTP://WWW.WEBER.EDU/COMMUNITYINVOLVEMENT/  
PREPARING\\_TO\\_SERVE.HTML](http://www.weber.edu/communityinvolvement/preparing_to_serve.html)**

# Cultural Sensitivity



## TRAINING MODULE

Kowalewski, B., Massen, A. and Mullins, S. (2010). *Cultural Sensitivity Training Module*. [http://www.weber.edu/CommunityInvolvement/Mentoring\\_Tutoring.html](http://www.weber.edu/CommunityInvolvement/Mentoring_Tutoring.html)

# Process of Cultural Competence



One of the main goals of this training module is to help you become more culturally aware of both yourself and the population with whom you will be working. Hopefully, through this process you will become more culturally sensitive to the needs of the community you are serving. Consider this training module as one small step toward becoming more culturally competent, understanding that cultural competence is not a one time finite achievement. It is a life long process.

# Module Topics



- Cultural Sensitivity and Competency
- Culture
  - Culture and Education
  - Cultural Identity
  - Cultural Misinformation
- Cultural Sensitivity in Specific Areas
  - Poverty
    - ✦ Assumptions
  - Language
  - Sexual Orientation
  - Spirituality and Religion



# Cultural Sensitivity



Cultural Competency involves more than just being aware of other cultures, ethnic groups and customs. It involves more than just being tolerant of differing lifestyles. It involves more than just suspending your judgments. **Being culturally sensitive means having the capacity to function effectively in other cultures. It is valuing and respecting diversity and being sensitive to cultural differences.**

# Why Consider Culture when Mentoring/Tutoring?



- Culture shapes a student's experiences with education.
- Culture shapes parents' responses to the educational system and their understanding of who is responsible for educating children.
- Culture shapes access to other services that might be crucial for the student's success.
- The culture of the educational system and the mentor/tutor will impact the outcome for students.

Adapted from Dr. Sujata Warriar, *Engaging Culture in Domestic and Sexual Violence Cases*.

# Why Consider Culture when Volunteering?



- Culture shapes individuals' knowledge of community organizations.
- Culture shapes an individual's experiences with community organizations and whether they see them as viable and accessible resources.
- Culture shapes individuals' responses to the community organization and the services they are providing.
- Culture shapes access to other services that might be crucial for the individual's success.
- The culture of the volunteer will impact the outcomes for the people and organization you are trying to serve.

Adapted from Dr. Sujata Warriar, *Engaging Culture in Domestic and Sexual Violence Cases*.

# What is Culture?

**A critical definition of culture refers to shared experiences or commonalities that have developed and continue to evolve in relation to changing social and political contexts, based on:**

- Race
- Ethnicity
- National origin
- Sexuality
- Gender
- Religion
- Age
- Social class
- Disability status
- Immigration status
- Education
- Geographic location
- Rural, urban, suburban
- Time, or
- Other axes of identification within the historical context of oppression

Adapted from Dr. Sujata Warriar, *Engaging Culture in Domestic and Sexual Violence Cases*.



# Cultural Identity



It is important to remember that every individual, regardless of appearance, has a rich cultural identity. Cultural identity refers to how a person defines themselves culturally, based on their unique experiences. It is important to recognize that an individual's cultural identity might contain contradictory, multi-faceted and often-changing elements. Persons might identify more strongly with one culture than another, might experience several identities simultaneously or might shift between identities.

Adapted from Dr. Sujata Warriar, *Engaging Culture in Domestic and Sexual Violence Cases*.

# Cultural Misinformation



Every human being holds perceptions about different cultures. Many times these perceptions are inaccurate because they are based on cultural misinformation. Cultural misinformation refers to historical information about a group of people that is applied as a generalization to an individual. In other words, misinformation involves stereotyping, wherein an individual associates a set of attributes to a group and then applies group attributes to an individual believed to be part of that group. This limits what we can see and understand about an individual and is often used to justify mistreatment of individuals by the dominant culture. Therefore, we must deliberately and intentionally examine cultural misinformation.

Adapted from Dr. Sujata Warriar, *Engaging Culture in Domestic and Sexual Violence Cases*.

# Self-Reflection



Pause for a minute now and recall a time when you made a cultural assumption about someone else. What assumption was made? What effect did it have on the situation?

Now, recall a time when someone else made an assumption about you based on their perception of your culture. What assumption was made? What effect did it have on you and on the situation?

Adapted from Dr. Sujata Warriar, *Engaging Culture in Domestic and Sexual Violence Cases*.

# Culture Does Matter



- Cultural identities are individual and complex, AND
- Cultural commonalities *do* exist BUT
- They are often over-simplified, and assumed where they may not exist, and overlooked when they may be there, AND
- Consequences of assumptions can be serious and are rooted in unequal power and privilege.

Adapted from Dr. Sujata Warriar, *Engaging Culture in Domestic and Sexual Violence Cases*.

# Cultural Sensitivity Begins With:



- Being aware of one's biases, prejudices and knowledge about the person with whom you are interacting. For example,
  - Challenge your assumptions.
  - Use appropriate language.
  - Be aware of assumptions.
- Recognizing the power and privilege your culture affords you and avoiding the imposition of those values. For example,
  - Use non-judgmental questions
  - Do not assume people have resources.
  - Do not assume everyone is like you.

Adapted from Dr. Sujata Warriar, *Engaging Culture in Domestic and Sexual Violence Cases*.

# Cultural Sensitivity in Specific Areas



The rest of this module will focus on developing cultural sensitivity around the following topics:

- Poverty
  - Assumptions
- Language
- Sexual Orientation
- Spirituality and Religion

# Poverty



Poverty has many complex definitions depending on the source. To best understand what poverty is we will define it as does Ruby Payne, professional educator.

**Poverty** is the extent to which an individual does without resources. These resources include; financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems, relationships/role models, and knowledge of hidden rules.



# Poverty Overview - Statistics



- 41 million Americans are impoverished, including 14 million children.
- 1400 students attending Davis Schools and 578 attending Ogden Schools are classified as homeless
- 1.7 million American youth are homeless or “unaccompanied”
- 20% of homeless youth are released from Foster Care without support
- 63% of homeless youth are runaways due to abuse or neglect
- Up to 7% American youths become homeless each year
- 25% of single mom families are impoverished
- The majority of impoverished work 2 or more jobs
- Utah ranks 14th lowest nationally in Low Food Security and ranks 4<sup>th</sup> lowest nationally in Very Low Food Security.

❖ [Poverty Video](#)



# Poverty



Checking assumptions and suspending judgments is crucial to being a successful mentor and tutor. Assumptions, or the belief that something is true without evidence, lead to stereotypes. An example would be what you have heard concerning groups of people via friends, neighbors, social media, etc.



# Assumptions



**Assumption:** The poor are lazy.

**Fact:** People in poverty expend a lot of energy on daily survival including working multiple jobs or finding employment, providing food, finding childcare, finding transportation and attending agency mandated trainings and meetings.



# Assumptions



**Assumption:** The poor are mostly from 1 or 2 racial groups, or are foreign born.

**Fact:** The average American impoverished family demographic is White non-Hispanic, American born, two parent family, aged 25-53, with two children.



# Assumptions



**Assumption:** The poor want to live off the welfare system, or choose to be poor.

**Fact:** While generational poverty exists, most experience situational poverty, or poverty due to circumstance, such as: loss of employment, health crisis, death and divorce. Situational poverty is generally short-term. People overcome their impoverished situations as their life circumstances improve.

# Language



Every culture has their own rules when it comes to acceptable language. When tutoring, mentoring or volunteering in a community organization, please refrain from using slang, derogatory or offensive language of any kind. What may seem okay to one group of people could be highly offensive to another.

Examples of some offensive language words : redneck, hick, white-trash, ghetto, stupid, **swear words**, or any words that degrade a specific group of people.

# Language



- Learn about other cultures and lifestyles to broaden your knowledge and understanding of others. Certain words can mean something different in one culture than it does in another.
- Remain sensitive to the effect of your actions and words on people of different ethnicities and cultures.
- Apologize if you offend someone.

# Sexual Orientation



Please be respectful of others sexual orientation. The government recognizes sexual orientation as a personal right that is protected under the law just as religion, sex, race, and age are. Discrimination towards others of a different sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

# Spirituality and Religion



- Not everyone is from your church of choice.
- You are at your service site to serve, not proselytize.
- Respect religious clothing requirements.
- Respect food preferences.
- Your religious beliefs, if any, belong to you. Please keep them to yourself.



# Review Questions



Please go to the following website and complete the review questions for this module. You will need to pass this quiz with a 80% or higher score. If you score lower than that, please review this module and retake the quiz.

<https://chitester.weber.edu/test.cfm?testID=35909>

You will only be able to print your *Certificate of Completion* once you successfully pass the quiz for this module.

**NOTE:** If you are not a Weber State University student or employee, you can login and complete the quiz by creating a new account.