Cultural Safety in Practice with Children, Families and Communities

Jessica Ball, M.P.H., Ph.D. School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria

Cultural safety is respectful engagement that supports and protects many paths to well–being.

"Finding our way to wellness among diverse communities of children and families requires many pathways. No one approach, no one program model, will reach or work for everyone."
Meadow Lake Tribal Council Administrator

What can we do to create culturally safe environments and encounters?

How can we reduce the sense of personal risk that some people experience when coming to a program, service, or project?

"My grandparents taught me that to truly understand the importance of something you must look back seven generations and you must look forward seven generations."   Debbie Jette, Cree Elder

Once upon a time...	*And then...*	*So now...*	*In future...*
Pre-contact:	**Colonialism:**	**Present:**	**Transnationalism:**
Cultural heterogeneity/ Insular communities	Cultural homogenization/ Silencing and resistance	Cultural reconstruction Persisting racism and essentialism	Hybrid cultures and identities Braiding together: "It's about *us*!"

Indicators of cultural un-safety

- Low utilization of available services
- 'Denial' of suggestions that there is a problem
- 'Non-compliance' with referrals or prescribed interventions
- Reticence in interactions with practitioners
- Anger
- Low self-worth
- Protests about lack of 'cultural appropriateness' of tools and interventions transported from dominant culture to minority culture

Culture: forms and goals of interactions among members of a group, and how they understand and communicate with one another.

Cultural sensitivity: appreciating that there are differences among cultures.

Cultural competence: being skilled in understanding interactions among members of a culture on their own terms.

Cultural safety: the outcome of interactions where individuals experience their cultural identity and way of being as having been respected or, at least, not challenged or harmed.

Cultural safety is an **outcome**. It is determined by the recipient of a service, or the participant in a program or project.

- Respectful relationships create cultural safety.
- Equitable partnerships appreciate that all parties have the right to influence the terms of engagement.
- The quality of engagement contributes importantly to outcomes.

Cultural perspectives on: Practitioner implications:

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1 Goals for development	1 Goals for program, services, or intervention
2 How to support optimal development and quality of life	2 Conceptual understandings
3 How to respond to development or life problems	3 Choice of program activities, service method, intervention strategy
4 Who is best positioned to help	4 Capacity development and deployment (recruitment, training, staff assignments)

- Tools, curricula, intervention strategies, and treatment approaches.
- Practitioners, educators, researchers.
- Program participants, clients, parents, service recipients.

All are embedded in particular cultural histories, contexts, and agendas.

What are these? How are they informing interactions and ideas about what is going to happen?

To learn more:

'Cultural safety' and the analysis of health policy affecting Aboriginal people.
V. Smye and A. Browne, Nurse Researcher (2002), 9 (3): 42-56.

Cultural safety in nursing: the New Zealand experience.
E. Papps & I. Ramsden. International Journal for Quality in Health Care (1996), 8 (5): 491-497.

Troubling National Discourses in Anti-Racist Curricular Planning.
C. Schick and V. St. Denis, Canadian Journal of Education (2005), 28 (3): 295-317.

For information and updates:
www.ecdip.org

Cultural Safety 5 Principles

Protocols
Show respect – Ask permission/informed consent
Seek cultural knowledge – Ask questions
Demonstrate reciprocity – Learning goes both ways
Engage community accompaniment –
Find allies, mentors in community of practice

Process
Ensure equity and dignity for all parties
Negotiate goals and activities
Talk less, listen more

Personal knowledge
Hone critical consciousness of social location/power
Who are you? Cultural affiliations, professional persona
Introduce yourself in terms of your cultural identities

Positive purpose
Build on strengths
Avoid negative labelling
Ensure confidentiality
Be accountable
Do no harm
Make it matter: Ensure real benefits

Partnerships
Engage in relational practice founded on authentic encounters
Share knowledge vs. 'telling'
Collaborative problem solving vs. expert/authority
Strengthen mutual capacity vs. one-way 'delivery'
Co-construct ways to move supports into place