Multicultural Counseling in Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) College Students

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DHH Student Enrollment

- National Center for Education Statistics
  - Somewhere around 20,000 DHH students attending college each year

- Gallaudet University (2019)
  - 1,523 students (42% minority and 5% international)

- National Technical Institute of the Deaf (2019)
  - 1,129 students (40% minority and 3.8% international)
DHH College Students

- Common Themes in Counseling with DHH Students
  - Exploration of Deaf identity
  - Social isolation
  - Discrimination
  - Lack of access
  - Social skills
  - Survivors of abuse
  - Sexuality
  - Advocating for accommodations
  - Independence
Minority Group within a Minority Group

- Common Themes in Counseling with Minority DHH Students
  - Cultural identity development
  - Health disparities
  - Racism and systemic racism
  - Access to and mistrust of the health care system
  - Acculturation
  - Oppression
  - Language barriers
COVID-19 Stressors

- Increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive thoughts
- Fear and worry about their own health and of their loved ones
- Difficulties concentrating
- Disruptions in sleeping patterns
- Decreased social interactions due to physical distancing
- Increased concerns on academic performances

(Son, Hegde, Smith, Wang, & Sasangohar, 2020)
Activity: Circle of My Multicultural Self

- Place your name in the center circle
- Write an important aspect of your identity
- This can include anything: Asian American, female, mother, athlete, educator, brother, Christian, scientist, or any descriptor with which you identify.
- Add more circles if needed
Activity: Discussion

- Share a story of a time when you were proud?

- Share a story about the time it was especially painful?

- Name a stereotype that tends to be connected with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are?
Intersectionality

- Occupation
- Education
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Language
- Heritage/History
- Immigration Status
- Agility
- Income
- Gender
- Family Status
- Aboriginality
- Geographic Location
- Sexuality
Multicultural Competency

- **Awareness:**
  - Developing an awareness of one’s own cultural values and biases.

- **Knowledge:**
  - Learning to value others’ worldviews.

- **Skills:**
  - Developing a set of culturally appropriate interpersonal skills

(Mio, Barker-Hackett, & Tumabing, 2012)
Moving Beyond Cultural Competence

- Cultural humility and responsiveness
  - Moving from a way of doing to a way of being (Hook et al., 2013)
  - Our cultural Identity and that of our client’s are both important aspects of therapeutic process (American Psychological Association, 2003)
  - Must have both an accurate view of ourselves and respect for others without an attitude of supremacy or superiority (Davis et al., 2011)
Multicultural Orientation (MCO) Framework

• Worldviews, values, and beliefs of the client and the therapist interact and influence one another to cocreate an experience that promotes healing

• Applicable to any therapeutic orientation or approach

• Not a “stand-alone” therapeutic approach or model, rather it compliments existing models of psychotherapy

(Davis, D. E., et. Al, 2018)
Three Pillars of MCO Framework

- A “way of being” in sessions for therapist (cultural humility)

- Identifying and responding to therapeutic cultural markers in sessions (cultural opportunities)

- A way of understanding the self in these moments (cultural comfort)
Developing cultural humility: pre-work

- **Self-Awareness**
  - Engage in self-reflecting and self-understanding
  
  - Reflect on how your different social identities have influenced (religion, sexuality, generation, acculturation, socioeconomic status, education, ethnicity) your worldview
  
  - Engage in reading, dialogues, workshops, etc. to help you have a better understanding of your privileges, biases, and values
Developing cultural humility: pre-work

- Valuing of others
  - Be curious
  - Demonstrate a willingness to learn from others around you
  - Respond from a place of genuineness and authenticity
  - Admitting ignorance and asking questions is a cornerstone of humility
  - Careful to not place responsibility on clients to teach you about culture (e.g. asking someone to teach about racism vs. asking someone to learn their experience of racism)
Developing cultural humility: pre-work

**Growth**

- Practicing cultural humility is a process
- Skill is not built overnight but a continuum of continuing learning throughout our careers
- Expect discomfort and anxiety related to cultural conversation and push through knowing you may not feel your best
Empathy

- Culturally responsive therapy requires empathy
  - Being understood is the most basic human need (Glickman, 2014)
  - Must set aside your own feelings and perceptions of things in order to value your client’s experiences
  - Need the ability to communicate the understanding of your client’s feelings and respond without judgement
  - Empathy is critical for change and growth (Hamilton, 2012)
How to be Culturally Responsive in Therapy

- Be mindful of how client’s social identities interact to make them unique.
- Consider how your values and worldview may influence your client’s perception of you and the potential impacts on rapport.
- Consider culture at each step of the appointment.
Culturally Responsive Therapy cont’d

- Acknowledge what is happening in the world outside of the therapy room.
  - Ask clients how they are holding up with (i.e. COVID, happening on news, social media, etc)

- Don’t make assumptions!
  - Ask clients how they identify
  - Avoid stereotyping
Culturally Responsive Therapy cont’d

- Barriers to being a culturally responsive therapist
  - Fear
  - Lack of preparedness for emotionally charged conversations
  - Feelings of inadequacy
  - Politeness protocol
  - Colorblindess

- Remember, cultural humility is being comfortable admitting what we don’t know. (Sue, 2013)
Thank You! Questions?

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