

International and Cultural Psychology
Series Editor: Anthony J. Marsella, Ph.D.

Farah A. Ibrahim
Jianna R. Heuer

Cultural and Social Justice Counseling

Client-Specific Interventions

 Springer

International and Cultural Psychology

Series Editor

Anthony J. Marsella

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Cultural and Social Justice Counseling

Client-Specific Interventions

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ISSN 1574-0455 ISSN 2197-7984 (electronic)
International and Cultural Psychology
ISBN 978-3-319-18056-4 ISBN 978-3-319-18057-1 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-18057-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015938911

Springer Cham Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London
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Printed on acid-free paper

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(www.springer.com)

It is with deep gratefulness and sincere appreciation that I acknowledge the support and encouragement I have received from my family, especially my mother, Iffat Almas, my brother, Naeem Khan, and my children, Jianna and Aaron, my mentors, Drs. Edwin L. Herr, Allen E. Ivey, and Clemmont Vontress, and my students and clients over the last 37 years. The gifts I have received from all these sources have facilitated my research endeavors, and my work on cultural competence, cultural responsiveness, and social justice in counseling interventions.

Farah A. Ibrahim

I want to thank my mother for inviting me to participate in writing this book; it has enhanced my knowledge and skills. Your love and support throughout my life has empowered me to be who I am today. To my brother, Aaron Schroeder, thank you for making me believe in second chances, I love you. To my partner, Jason Heuer, this book would not exist without

*your love and support—you are my rock
and inspiration. To my mentors, grateful
thanks to Diana Gasperoni, for always
believing in me and for sharing your
invaluable knowledge and skills with me,
and Gina Barreca, for helping me believe
I really could be a writer. To the students,
staff, and interns I have worked with
at LaGuardia Community College,
thank you for teaching me patience,
acceptance, and tolerance and allowing
me to be a part of your journey.
To my friends and therapist,
thank you for your support and care.*

Gianna R. Heuer

Disclaimer

The cases in this text are developed on hypothetical clients, designed to demonstrate using the cultural assessments to make the interventions client specific. Any resemblance to any specific client, or situation is coincidental, and the profiles are not specific to any specific person or situation.

Introduction

What Does This Book Offer You, the Professional, and Our Profession?

A new book, at its best, offers new, challenging, and important insight leading us to the future. This is a book that can and will make a difference for your daily practice and/or teaching. In addition, it is a book that leads to increasing competence and understanding for counselors, psychologists, social workers, and human service professionals.

You will soon start reading the work of Farah A. Ibrahim and Jianna R. Heuer, so I'll be brief with bullet points. I suggest special attention to the following issues:

- We talk about multiculturalism with awareness that diversity is complex and multifaceted. Rather than just sharing broad differences in culture, this book shows how to assess the individual client and then establish appropriate interventions that make sense to the client and lead to change.
- The above tall order is achieved through presenting specific steps for operationalizing treatment plans based on acculturation status within one's own culture, as well as acculturation to the dominant culture within which the client lives.
- We now all agree that William Cross' cultural identity theory (CIT) is an essential part of counseling and clinical practice. The authors show how concepts of worldview may be assessed in conjunction with CIT leading to individually unique understandings and actions.
- I am impressed with the authors' discussion of acculturation. The practical and useful balance for assessing acculturation is essential for us all. Too much of our multicultural thought is focused on cultural "difference." Of course, this is central, but the authors move us forward with innovative insights—particularly, interventions need to be in accord with the acculturation of the client. For example, clients of Mexican descent may be recent immigrants or they could have been in the USA for generations. They have in common discrimination and other cultural traits, but their level of acculturation and accompanying counseling needs varies extensively.

- Social justice action has become increasingly central to our profession, and its focus on community and social change is critical, but insufficient attention has been given to the social justice implications of psychotherapy—and the authors show how profoundly important it is to include ideas of social justice in the individual interview.
- Understanding immigrants and refugees become the focus of two separate chapters—definitive in nature. Trauma is a feature of both experiences and here the discussion will again be most helpful.
- Fascinating, relevant, and highly useful case studies provide the conclusion of this book. Here, we see how the concepts presented earlier are implemented in counseling and clinical practice.

In short, there is a lot here to absorb, as several concepts will be practice changing. Each of us will take something unique from this book that will make a difference. We are all lucky to have the wisdom of Farah A. Ibrahim and Jianna R. Heuer. Enjoy your time with them.

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Preface

This text addresses a void in the literature on diverse counseling encounters by providing tools and approaches for cultural assessment. It also presents social justice variables of privilege and oppression to help make the counseling intervention (process and goals) relevant and meaningful to the client. Several texts have addressed the issue of counseling the “other” or counseling within-group, and counseling clients from other cultural contexts than the helper’s, i.e., culture (ethnicity, nationality), disability, gender, and sexual orientation, and these include books on theories, strategies, and skills, along with guidelines and competency statements issued by professional associations to increase efficacy in counseling across cultures, genders, sexual orientations, spirituality or religions, developmental stages, and ability/disability levels. In addition, researchers have addressed the importance of social class, and contexts that clients come from, cultural and geographic.

However, no text has addressed how the counselor or clinician can formulate a counseling intervention plan, by providing specific information for addressing all the cultural and social justice variables that are contextual for a client. As Marsella (2015) notes “How can successful counseling ignore or be indifferent to the cultural context of a person’s life? How can the personal history of being a racial or ethnocultural minority be avoided or denied with all of its consequences for accumulated injustices, oppression, and abuses? When this occurs, it is no longer counseling as a healing art and science that is present, rather it is simply a re-socialization” (p. vii). Although texts exist that address these variables individually, this leaves the average counselor/therapist wondering how they can attend to so many factors, while also focusing on the client, the presenting problem, and building a therapeutic relationship.

This text helps mental health professionals in (a) identifying the cultural and contextual variables significant for a client by getting the information from the client, (b) building a therapeutic relationship during this process, and (c) incorporating client-specific cultural information in developing the goals for counseling, and making the intervention culture specific. We continue to hear about early terminations, and disappointing counseling encounters for culturally different clients (Sue, Zane, Hall, & Berger, 2009). These negative outcomes are the result of an inability to incorporate the client-specific cultural variables, client values, beliefs and assump-

tions, and contextual variables, such as social class and place in a hierarchical society, into the counseling intervention. When we are presented with broad guidelines either about a cultural group, or counseling competency statements, without any guidance on how to operationalize the information and make it relevant to a client's situation, it results in confusion for the helping professional, and frustration for the client. Shin (2015) notes that "a common criticism of racial/ethnic identity stage theories, offered previously by several scholars, is the fact that the models fail to capture the vast intra-group differences in identity development within all racial and ethnic groups" (p. 13). This stance can be generalized to most of the information one finds in the multicultural counseling domain, ergo the need to "decolonize" the field of cross-cultural, multicultural, transcultural counseling, by taking away the generalities common to psychology to describe cultural groups, without providing the tools to make information applied to counseling settings client specific. The primary goal in providing therapeutic services is to initially develop a therapeutic relationship. However, focusing on what the profession wants, recommendations from the research literature, and the training that professionals undergo, and requirements for ethical practice create a dilemma for a therapist.

Making the intervention meaningful to a client is the goal of this text, using specific cultural assessment tools, and providing case studies to highlight how the assessments were helpful in making the intervention client specific. The purpose of counseling is to help the client in making his or her life more manageable; by providing knowledge and skills that will provide insights, and enhance the client's ability to negotiate the personal, cultural, social, and occupational world successfully. Given this goal, it is evident that a text is needed to address the issue of how to manage the body of literature available in a meaningful manner, and to incorporate the knowledge, skills, and competencies into each specific counseling intervention, and to meet the client in his or her cultural, familial, social, and occupational world, along with recognizing the personal variables, such as personal style, and attitudes, that are commonly addressed in counseling encounters.

This text addresses critical information needed to conduct appropriate cultural assessments and incorporate the results into the counseling interventions, i.e., development of goals and process. As counseling and psychology goes international due to impact of globalization, it is critical that theory, practice, and research consider meaningfulness of theories, competency and ethical guidelines, and assessment models for a global audience (Friedman, 1999; Leach & Gauthier, 2012; Leong, Pickren, Leach, & Marsella, 2012). This is especially critical as many developing and developed nations look to American Psychology as the standard for theory, practice, and research. The chapters present information on the rationale and research for using cultural assessments; the information is grounded in professional, and ethical guidelines for assessment, and counseling interventions. Not only does the text identify the key cultural domains that need assessment to understand the client's cultural identity and context, it also includes cases (Chap. 8) to show how the information is incorporated into the counseling process.

The cases utilize assessment strategies needed for each case to develop interventions that are culturally sensitive, and tailored to address the client's presenting problem, incorporating culturally relevant strategies and goals for a positive outcome. The strategies and tools presented are not the only the ones in the research literature, several instruments and tools exist, we encourage you to consider cultural assessment strategies that would be specific and useful for the client you are working with, and to develop your interventions incorporating the domains identified in this text, i.e., incorporating cultural identity, worldview, acculturation, privilege and oppression, and other client-specific issues that may be relevant. Good luck with your interventions and may you be highly successful in your chosen profession and provide culturally sensitive, and responsive counseling and psychotherapy in all your settings.

Denver, CO

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