Bilingualism and Multiculturalism: Implications for Counselors Working with the Deaf Community

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Activity • Visual Gestural Name Game

Hi my name is

Deaf? What is it?

• Deafness is the lack of ability to hear only.
• Its all about decibels.
  Deaf people do have a voice
• Deafness varies in cause, onset, impact on a person and severity.
• Deafness is conductive, sensorineural, or both.

Bilingualism- Fluency in two languages
Multiculturalism- Universal vs. Focused view (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992)
Multicultural Counseling Competencies- Attitudes & Beliefs, Knowledge, & Skills (Arredondo et al., 1996)
Frameworks to view diverse client populations

Deaf? So What?

• Prelingual deafness: interferes with the acquisition of speech and language (hearing language) present mostly with behavioral difficulties.
• Postlingual deafness: most Postlingual clients present with depression, loneliness and relationship difficulties.
• The age of hearing loss has bearing on emotional, developmental and educational experiences (Halgin & McEntee, 1986)
Big “D” Deaf:
Tend to have attended programs for Deaf people and feel connected to the social life, politics, arts, humor, and values of Deaf culture.
This view of deafness, sometimes called the cultural view, recognizes that Deaf people often reject the idea that they need to be “fixed” or cured, are proud of their differences, and enjoy the uniqueness of their community, (Kluth, 2006).

Little “d” deaf
Tend to have few associations with the Deaf community and may never have experienced schooling or community activities with others who are Deaf.
This view, sometimes called the medical or clinical view, essentially accepts the behaviors and values of people who can hear as the norm, (Kluth, 2006).

Deaf? So What? Learn the Culture

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation.
It also mandates the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services.
The current text of the ADA includes changes made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325), which became effective on January 1, 2009.
The ADA was originally enacted in public law format and later rearranged and published in the United States Code.

ADA

In the United States 23 million have hearing loss.
There is no current study on the amount of Deaf individuals there are in the state of Texas.
DHHS total service population in 2005 was estimated to be more than 3.8 million in Texas.
According to TCA membership, there are 15 counselors that list ASL as a language, five are school counselors.

Texas Statistics

• Name some ways in which you think the Deaf community is being discriminated against?
  • Job
  • Education
  • Mental Health Services
  • Medical
  • Legal

Multicultural Issues Impacting Deaf Community When Seeking Mental Health Treatment

Ableism
Discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities.
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Audism

“An attitude based on pathological thinking which results in a negative stigma toward anyone who does not hear like racism or sexism, audism judges, labels, and limits individuals on the basis of whether a person hears and speaks,” (Humphrey and Acorn 1993, p.85).

Audism

Lane (1999) describes audism as the corporate institution for dealing with deaf people, dealing with them by making statements about them, authorizing views of them, describing them, teaching about them, governing where they go to school and, in some cases where they live; in short audism is the hearing way of dominating, restructuring, and exercising authority over the deaf community. (p. 43)

Institutions:
Hospitals, Work and Schools

Media:
Marlee Matlin the famous Deaf actress is the spokesperson for a hearing aid device.

Audism

Activity

• Small group discussion: How the Deaf Communicate.

Combatting Audism

• Approach and promote Deaf civil rights in the context of Deaf ethnicity.
• Promote diversity - Exposure to cultures other than native one
• Make Deaf Culture visible (Deaf Awareness Week).

ASL

• 1760 First School for the Deaf in France.
• 1817 Laurent Clerc introduces French Sign Language (FSL) to United States.
• First Deaf School in Hartford Connecticut
• Martha’s Vineyard Sign Language.
• Original intent of ALL sign language was religious proselytizing.
Benefits of ASL

- Work with an underserved set of the United States population.
- Broaden our perception of a cultural minority within the United States.
- Have a skillset that is in high demand.
- American Sign Language is a primary language for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

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Means of Communication

- Oral-Speech reading
- American Sign Language-Visual language
- Sign Systems-English syntax
- Mime (Gesture)
- Fingerspelling
- Cued Speech
- Total Communication-Involves all the above

Interpreter

- Ease of communication
- Accurate communication
- May be used as a crutch not to learn a second language.
- Save a lot of time
- Effectively understand

No Interpreter

- Diminish spirit of privacy and confidentiality
- Intrusion on therapeutic relationship
- May cause embarrassment and inhibition

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Diagnostic and Assessment:

- Leigh, Corbett, Guitman, & Morere (1996) report that due to the difference in syntax and grammar between ASL and English, a diagnostician may interpret the Deaf persons communication as psychotic or aphasic, which may lead to misdiagnosis.
- Many written assessments will not work well with the Deaf clients because of the high level of English skill that is necessary for assessment.

How can I embrace a bilingual and multicultural identity

- Study a foreign language, any foreign language.
- Examine cultural biases.
- Appreciate Divergent Worldviews
- Others?

Benefits of a Second Language

- Has a positive effect on intellectual growth.
- Enriches and enhances mental development.
- Leaves students with more flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and a better ear for listening.
- Improves understanding of his/her native language.
- Ability to communicate with people s/he would otherwise not have the chance to know.
- Opens the door to other cultures and helps to foster understanding and appreciate people within native country and from foreign lands.
Strategies for working with the Deaf Community

- Treat the client with respect and autonomy.
- Obtain an etiological, audiological and educational history.
- Counselors with expertise in the Deaf community should be consulted as needed.

- Learn the Language, Deaf people appreciate it when you try.
- Ask the Deaf person what is their preferred way of communication.
- If there is an interpreter in the room, ask the question of the client, face the client not the interpreter.

Strategies for working with the Deaf Community

- A study by Freeman and Conoley (1986) indicates that most Deaf clients prefer a clinician who can sign fluently rather than using an interpreter.
- Network with the Deaf Organizations to sensitize oneself to the Deaf culture. This lends to credibility.
- Change stereotyped views of Deaf people.
- Modify treatment and theoretical approaches.

Resolutions

- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
  (703) 838-0030
  Texas Society of Interpreters for the Deaf
  PO Box 684728, Austin, TX 78768-4728

References