

Reality Check: Improving Service Delivery to Multi-Challenged Families

Prepared by

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Who Is Robert Wright?

- A registered SW Private Practitioner
- PhD Student in Sociology – Race, Identity, Power
- Former Race Relations Coordinator of the Dartmouth District School Board
- Former Executive Director of Family & Children's Services of Cumberland County
- Former Executive Director of N.S.'s Child & Youth Strategy

Why This Conference?

- Our usual methods aren't working!
 - Increased complexity
 - Growing understanding of intersectionality
 - Increasing diversity
 - Erosion of social institutions
 - Greater consequences for social failures

- Traditional Intervention Focus is Limited
 - Clients are often seen as the problem, defective, problemed, need to be fixed
 - Clients therefore are the focus of our attention/intervention
 - When clients are resistant or unsuccessful we blame them for our failure

What do you Need

- What are the things you need to get out of this day to make it valuable to you?

The Eco Structural Approach

- Complex issues need systems interventions
- MST widely seen as effective for multi-challenged youth (Henggeler)
- Individual, family and community work indicated (McGoldrick)
- Resiliency theory identifies multiple domains for intervention (Ungar)

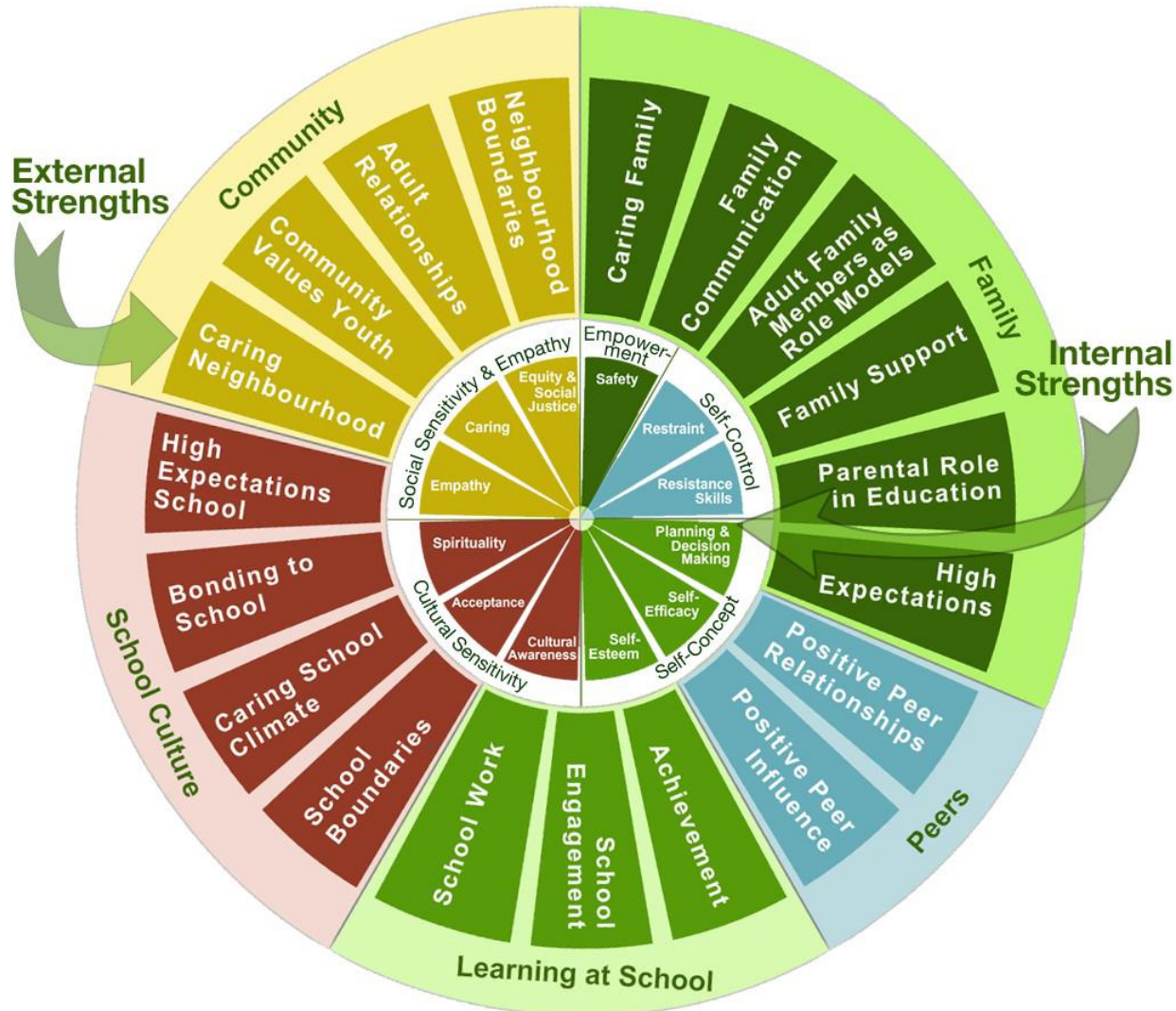
Old Model

Just Looked at Youth



Newer Models

Look at the whole system



Powerful Models

- All speak of understanding “context” of clients
- All speak of the need for “helpers” to be able to bridge the gap between where they are and where the client is
- We have not learned models for doing that

Cultural Competence as a Framework

Creating a Circle of Safety

- As I note later, the conversation about race and culture in North America is difficult. What can we do today to ensure that

Cultural Competence: Definition

- Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Cultural competence comprises four essential capacities:
 - A. We must understand our own cultural positions and how they differ from and are similar to others
 - B. We must understand the social and cultural reality in which we live and work and in which our clients live and work
 - C. We must cultivate appropriate attitudes towards cultural difference
 - D. We must be able to generate and interpret a wide variety of verbal and non-verbal responses

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A) Nichols' Model for Understanding Cultural Difference

Philosophical Perspective on Cultural Difference. Edwin Nichols (cf. work of Jung)

Different world cultures developed out of differing physical environments.

These world views have differing constructs:

- Axiology (values)
- Epistemology (way of knowing)
- Logic (principles of reason)
- Process (practice of reason)

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

DEVELOPED BY EDWIN J. NICHOLS, PH.D.

ETHNIC GROUPS ETHNIC WORLDVIEW	AXIOLOGY	EPISTEMOLOGY			LOGIC	PROCESS
		APPLIED	PEDAGOGY	METHODOLOGY		
EUROPEAN EURO-AMERICAN	Member-Object The highest value lies in the object or the acquisition of the object	One knows through Counting and Measuring	Parts to Whole	Linear and Sequential <i>-Assembly line-</i>	Dichotomous <i>Either/Or</i> <i>-Newtonian theory-</i>	All sets are repeatable and reproducible <i>-Technology-</i>
AFRICAN AFRICAN AMERICAN LATINO/A ARAB	Member-Member The highest value lies in the relationships between persons	One knows through Symbolic Imagery and Rhythm (function) <i>-Gladwell <u>Blink</u>-</i>	Whole Holistic Thinking <i>-The BIG picture-</i>	Critical Path analysis <i>-Cut to the chase-</i>	Diunital <i>Union of opposites</i> Difrasismo <i>-Aztec thought-</i> The In Between <i>Ibn 'Arabi</i> <i>-Quantum theory-</i>	All sets are interrelated through human and spiritual networks <i>-Black church-</i>
ASIAN ASIAN AMERICAN POLYNESIAN	Member-Group The highest value lies in the cohesiveness of the group	One knows through Transcendental Striving <i>-Tree the forest-</i>	Whole and parts are seen simultaneously <i>-To read a Chinese word-</i>	Cyclical and Repetitive <i>-Stroke order in writing a Chinese word-</i>	Nyaya <i>-The objective world is conceived independent of thought and mind-</i> <i>-Chaos theory-</i>	All sets are independently interrelated in the harmony of the universe <i>-Keiretsu-</i>
NATIVE AMERICAN	Member-Great Spirit The highest value lies in oneness with the Great Spirit	One knows through Reflection and Spiritual Receptivity <i>-Purification rites-</i>	Whole is seen in cyclic movement <i>-Seasons-</i> <i>-Medicine Wheel-</i>	Environmentally experiential reflection <i>-Rites of Passage-</i>	Great Mystery <i>-A set of 4 and a set of 3 form the whole-</i> <i>-Super string theory-</i>	All sets are interrelated through the elements, plant, animal, and spiritual networks <i>-White Buffalo-</i>

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Nichol's Model is consistent with a growing understanding and articulation of Aboriginal Traditional Ecological Knowledge: an Ancient and yet ever evolving body of knowledge, practice and belief which concerns itself with the inter relationship of all living things with and within their environment.

Africentricity

There is a growing global and local understanding of the fundamental elements of African thought, culture and philosophy. Somewhat controversial, certainly not standardized, nevertheless its growing legitimacy has been established. Its hallmark is the assertion of a worldview that places all people of African descent at its centre, asserts a common culture, philosophy and history and critiques and perhaps even rewrites global history from this perspective

This does not suggest pigeon-holing

Just because a person is identifiably a member of a particular ethno-cultural, racial or aboriginal group does not mean they will ascribe to a pre-set notion of that groups culture.

The model does give us some understanding of how people can differ in themes related to values, worldview, etc.

Identifying our Values and Ways of Knowing Exercise

- Individually, reflect on the Nichols' Model. Consider which of the traditional world views' Values and "Ways of Knowing" most closely aligns with your own. If none, take a minute to describe your own Values and Ways of Knowing. (10 min)
- Now, find someone who most closely shares your world view and talk about how similar and how different the two of you are. (10 min)
- Now, find someone who is most different from you in your world view and talk about how similar and how different the two of you are. (10 min)
- Report Back (10 min)

Break Time!



B) Social, Cultural and Historical Context

North American Diversity is fraught with complicated and tragic history

- **Enslavement of Africans, Genocide of First Nations, Global strife resulting in trans-global immigration etc.**

A local knowledge of how our racist history is a living legacy is necessary: Africville, Cornwallis.

(Aylward talks of the need for this knowledge to aid in our ability to “spot issues” of race)

C) Appropriate Attitudes

Cultural competence requires that practitioners actually *value* diversity, not just tolerate it. In a nation that acknowledges multiple founding peoples, that was built up on the foundation of ethnic/immigrant labour and whose future depends on immigration any other attitude should reasonably be seen as unacceptable.

D) Communicating Across Cultures

Cross cultural communication is a complex study in cultural hermeneutics. In sociology: the context of a person's world view is necessary for the proper understanding and interpretation of behaviour and rhetoric.

Before meaningless, unnatural, non-human or immature behaviour and corresponding values are attributed to people of another culture, it is better to begin by doubting the adequacy of one's own judgment and knowledge.

- **Elmar Holenstein**

A Question

- I am confident that most of the people in the room would assert that they value diversity:
 - Consider how persons who might differ from you would be able to assess within first meeting you that you value diversity and a “culturally safe” person with whom to deal.
 - When would you be aware that the cultural difference between you and your client is creating a barrier which needs focussed attention to resolve?
 - How and when would you raise the issue?

Q & A

Final Considerations

Lunch!



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