

Culture

CULTURAL MISPERCEPTIONS

- Culture is foreign
- Culture belongs to someone else
- Culture is exotic
- Culture and ethnicity are synonymous
- Culture is colorblind
- Culture is primarily external

FUNCTION OF CULTURE

- 1) Culture defines the accepted behaviors, roles, interpretations, and expectations of a social group. Nothing escapes the power of culture. How people dress, what they eat, what they do for fun, how they spend their waking hours, what they believe is true, right, or wrong all come as a result of cultural influences.
- 2) Culture gives people a sense of identity. Having gender identity, age, religion, history and certain material possessions provide the tools through which self-identity is forged.

CULTURE IS ACQUIRED

- Culture is learned (from the moment of birth)
- Culture is shared
- Culture is adaptive and changing
- There are variations among people of the same cultural group

ASPECTS OF AMERICAN CULTURE

- The importance of individuality and privacy
- A belief in the quality of individuals
- Informality in interactions with others
- An emphasis on the future, change and progress
- Belief in the general goodness of humanity
- An emphasis on time and punctuality
- High regard for achievement, action, work and materials
- Pride in being direct and assertive
- Right of freedom of speech
- Belief in meritocracy – those with ability will rise to the top
- A belief in the value of empiricism – we need proof

PEOPLE WHO IGNORE, MINIMIZE OR DISREGARD CULTURE

- View others who are different from them as less than them
- Have a tendency to view other rituals and customs as ‘weird’
- Unfairly stereotype people based on appearance
- Can become hateful or discriminate against other cultures

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: OUR ULTIMATE AIM

- Awareness of your own values, attitudes and biases, and an understanding of how they are likely to affect people who are not of the ‘dominant’ culture
- Appreciation of diverse cultures and comfort with differences between yourself and other cultures
- A belief that your culture is not better than any other

AS HUMANS WE JUDGE OTHERS – THE FOLLOWING SHOULD BE THE STANDARD FOR JUDGING PEOPLE, NOT THE COLOR OF SKIN, ETHNICITY, RELIGION OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- The character of a person (honesty, integrity, courage, etc.)
- The manner in which a person treats and respects others
- A person’s competence, level of skill and ability to reason
- A person’s attitude and effort

PROFESSIONALLY, WE SHOULD STRIVE TO BECOME MORE AWARE OF CULTURE NOT BECAUSE IT IS POLITICALLY CORRECT, BUT BECAUSE

- We are moving toward a world economy
- We want to be able to meet the needs of many different segments of the population
- U.S. Census Bureau expects the proportion of white families to decline steadily from 69% in 1990 to about 50% in 2030
- The proportion of families who are Hispanic, African American or of another minority group in the U.S. is expected to grow from 31% to 50% by 2030

1. Fill out as much of this information as possible.

Ethnic Background:

Gender:

Political Affiliation:

Sexual Orientation:

Religion:

2. Pick one or two topics from the list above and discuss how they influence your perception and/or behavior in this world.

3. If we assume that achieving “cultural competence” is an admirable goal, for which population are you closest to reaching that goal and furthest away from reaching that goal?

Closest and why:

Furthest and why: