

Cross-Cultural Awareness

Part I



Refugee
Sponsorship
Training
Program

Understanding Culture

Overview

- Definitions
- Understanding culture
 - What is culture?
 - Dimensions and aspects of culture
 - Understanding my culture
 - Factors that impact cultural understanding
- Group Discussion



Definitions

- **VALUES** are the core of one's beliefs and are manifested in all our behaviours.
- **BIAS** is a tendency to affiliate with one side, showing a preference or choice.
- **CULTURAL IDENTITY** defines who we are.



Definitions

- **PREJUDICE** can be defined as pertaining to
 - a preconceived opinion, thought or feeling (or prejudice)
 - the tendency to hold on to an attitude, idea, or feeling
 - an unfavourable opinion or feeling
 - the tendency to dislike or be hostile to individuals and groups that are identifiable from your own
 - the tendency to negatively perceive and define individuals on the basis of *stereotypes*
 - personal attitudes towards other individuals that are not inborn but are learned from society



Definitions

- **DISCRIMINATION**

- it is not always the result of a conscious decision or intentional
- is the ACTION that arises out of prejudice
- systemic discrimination refers to discrimination that results from long standing practices that have not been re-evaluated for their ramifications



Definitions

- **STEREOTYPES** can be defined as pertaining to:

- clusters of preconceived notions regarding various groups
- a fixed and distorted generalization

- Stereotypes

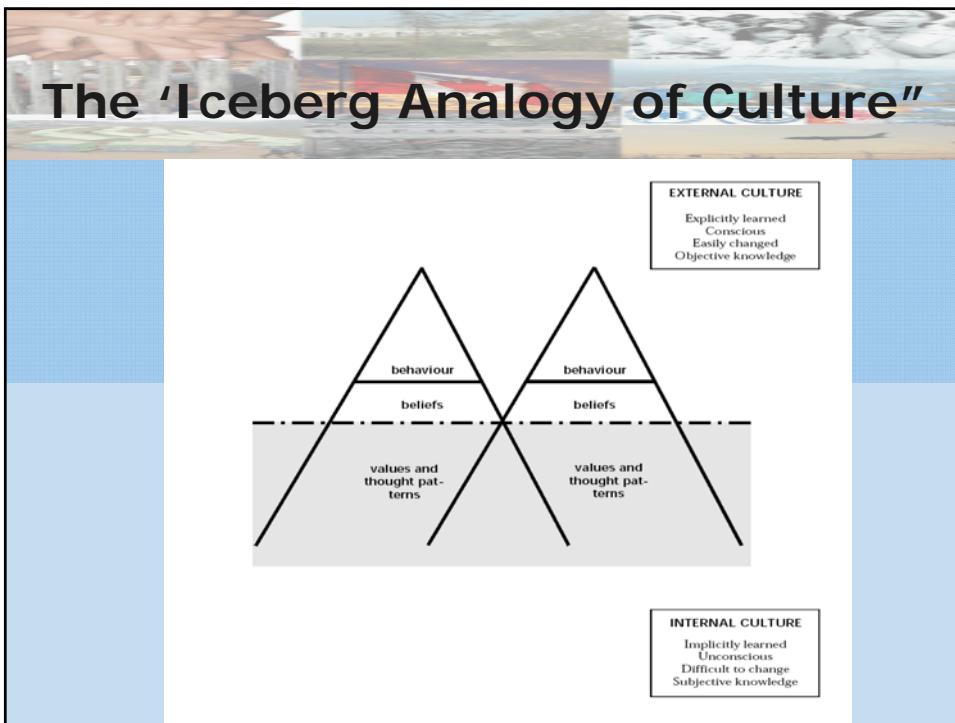
- ignore individual differences
- support underlying prejudice or fundamental bias about others
- support a superiority/inferiority belief system
- are used to justify unfair differential treatment

We learn stereotypes through socialisation and they are often reinforced/perpetuated by the media.

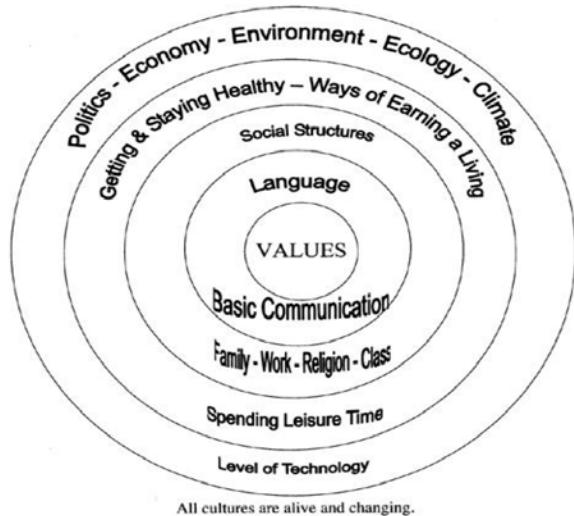
What is culture?

- Group brainstorm ...

A cartoon illustration showing four people of different ethnicities sitting around a round table, looking at papers. Above them is a large, detailed drawing of a human brain with yellow lightning bolts around it, symbolizing ideas or thought processes.



Culture is the sum total of the way people live



Dimensions of culture

Time and time consciousness
Sense of self and space
Communication and language
Dress and appearance
Food and eating habits
Relationships
Values and norms
Beliefs and attitudes
Mental processes and learning
Work habits and practices



Aspects of culture

Culture is learned

Culture is shared

Culture experiences vary

Culture changes continuously

Every exchange with others is
intercultural



Understanding my culture

1. Did you find any challenges when trying to reflect on your own culture?
2. What were the most important sources of your cultural programming?
3. Where do they come into conflict with each other?
4. Under what circumstances does one source take priority over another?
5. Why is it important for us to understand our own culture?



Culture self awareness

- Recognize
- Articulate
- Appreciate

our own cultural identity and background

**Cultural self awareness is the
single most important factor for
successful intercultural relations.**



Brief encounters

Pandya and Chola Culture



Brief encounters debriefing

1. How do you feel?
2. What happened?
3. What did you learn?
4. What if...?



Adanac story

- Objective – to experience how our own cultural baggage affects our perceptions





Adanac visualisation

1. What did you see (senses)?
2. What is your interpretation of what was happening (interpretation)?
3. How do you feel? And/or how do you think the Adanacan male/female felt?



Adanacan worldview

The earth rather than the heavens is the seat of the gods. Women are superior beings; hence, they sit directly on the earth, bare their feet, kneel and pray, for they alone have access to the gods.



Factors that impact cultural understanding

- Stereotyping, what is the impact?
 - To negate people's individuality and their value
 - To minimize individual talents, potentials and accomplishments
 - To set narrow, inflexible expectations
 - To act as filters on our perceptions of others
 - To have the effect of anger and hurt
 - To marginalize a person or a group
 - To inhibit the development of authentic relationships
 - To transform prejudice into destructive "isms" – ageism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, racism, sexism, etc...
 - To adversely affect performance in the workplace



Systemic discrimination

Unintentional
Appears neutral
Universally applied
Entrenched
Screens out groups
Hidden



Forms of discrimination

- Omission
- Superiority
- Production and reproduction of discriminatory behaviours
- Reproduction of skills



Causes of prejudice and discrimination

1. Ignorance Theory
2. Negative Experiences
3. Frustration-Aggression or Scapegoat Theory
4. Authoritarian Personality
5. Inter-Group Competition
6. Inter-Group Exploitation
7. Learned Prejudice

Group discussion

Factors that impact cultural understanding of sponsored refugees:

What are some stereotypes Canadians typically have of sponsored refugees?

Why do people continue to hold such stereotypes?

What do you believe is the impact of prejudice and discrimination on sponsored refugees?

What role can sponsors and refugees play in addressing stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination?

Thank-you



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For more information please visit:
www.rstp.ca