

Viewing Diversity as the Cherry on Top: Culturally Responsive Awareness & Practice Guide

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Abstract:

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) and SLP students devote themselves to serving individuals with various communication, swallowing, and hearing disorders across the lifespan. SLPs not only encounter diverse diagnoses, but also diverse ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds. Significant increases in the number of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals across the United States present a major challenge to monolingual SLPs who are required to serve children and their families from a variety of cultural or linguistic backgrounds (Caesar, 2013). Thus, there is an increase of importance for current and future SLPs to be ready to provide optimal services for clients who represent many backgrounds. An additional key factor to consider is the SLPs level of cultural competence. Cultural competence can be defined as the process through which one develops an understanding of self, while developing the ability to foster responsive, reciprocal, and respectful relationships with others (Battle, 2000). Future and current SLPs can better serve diverse populations when they are aware of their cultural competence, can utilize their knowledge of cultural and linguistic differences to facilitate client-clinician relationship building, and can identify opportunities to value the client's culture and beliefs in therapy.

Grab Your Cone - Introduction:



As diversity expands within our population, SLPs and SLP students are responsible for preparing and administering culturally appropriate services. An issue within our field is the limited preparedness to serve diverse populations and their families.

Challenges include the following (Verdon et al., 2015):

- A lack of culturally appropriate tools for assessment
- Limited developmental norms for linguistically diverse populations
- Barriers to service provision in children's primary languages
- Limited professional development for working with families from different cultural backgrounds
- Sufficient time to undertake additional elements of practice recommended for working with diverse families

Table 2.
Population by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2014 and 2060
(Population in thousands)

Race and Hispanic origin ¹	2014		2060		Change, 2014 to 2060	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total population	318,748	100.0	416,795	100.0	98,047	30.8
One Race	310,753	97.5	390,772	93.8	80,020	25.8
White	246,940	77.5	285,314	68.5	38,374	15.5
Non-Hispanic White	198,103	62.2	181,930	43.6	-16,174	-8.2
Black or African American	42,039	13.2	59,693	14.3	17,654	42.0
American Indian and Alaska Native	3,957	1.2	5,607	1.3	1,650	41.7
Asian	17,083	5.4	38,965	9.3	21,882	128.1
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	734	0.2	1,194	0.3	460	62.6
Two or More Races	7,995	2.5	26,022	6.2	18,027	225.5
Race Alone or in Combination²						
White	254,009	79.7	309,567	74.3	55,558	21.9
Black or African American	45,562	14.3	74,530	17.9	28,968	63.6
American Indian and Alaska Native	6,528	2.0	10,169	2.4	3,640	55.8
Asian	19,983	6.3	48,575	11.7	28,592	143.1
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1,458	0.5	2,929	0.7	1,470	100.8
Hispanic or Latino Origin						
Hispanic	55,410	17.4	119,044	28.6	63,635	114.8
Not Hispanic	263,338	82.6	297,750	71.4	34,412	13.1

Colby & Ortman (2013)

Grab Your Scoop(s)- Assessment of Cultural Competence:



Self-assessments are optimal ways to reflect, reset, and take action. Think of the scoop of ice cream as the assessment you choose to evaluate your cultural competence. This assessment can correlate to choosing a flavor, or which assessment tool works best for you. It can also correlate to selecting how many scoops you would like, or how many times you want to complete a self-assessment to monitor your cultural competence. Please scan the QR code below for access to two self-assessments of cultural competence.

PROMOTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports to Children with Disabilities & Special Health Needs and their Families

Directions: Please select A, B, or C for each item listed below.

A = Things I do frequently, or statement applies to me to a great degree
B = Things I do occasionally, or statement applies to me to a moderate degree
C = Things I do rarely or never, or statement applies to me to minimal degree or not at all

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- ___ 1. I display pictures, posters and other materials that reflect the cultures and ethnic backgrounds of children and families served by my program or agency.
- ___ 2. I insure that magazines, brochures, and other printed materials in reception areas are of interest to and reflect the different cultures of children and families served by my program or agency.
- ___ 3. When using videos, films or other media resources for health education, treatment or other interventions, I insure that they reflect the cultures of children and families served by my program or agency.
- ___ 4. When using food during an assessment, I insure that meals provided include foods that are unique to the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of children and families served by my program or agency.
- ___ 5. I insure that toys and other play accessories in reception areas and those, which are used during assessment, are representative of the various cultural and ethnic groups within the local community and the society in general.

Sample of a Cultural Competence Assessment, from Goode (2004)

Spray the Whipped Cream - Relationship Building:



Whipped cream is the substance that connects the ice cream with the cherry. This connection can also be considered the relational aspect we create when we are building rapport with a family. If professionals and families are to establish a strong partnership, they must develop a trusting relationship (Bowen, 2016). Understanding the cultural values and beliefs that guide parents and families in their child-rearing practices and the perspectives that influence their goals and expectations for their child's future are crucial to development of these relationships. Once we have established a trusting relationship with our culturally and linguistically diverse families, we are then able to value and utilize this shared information in therapy.

Place the Cherry on Top – Opportunities to Value Client's Culture:



The best opportunity to appreciate a client's difference is by acknowledging and utilizing their culture in therapy. One way this can be achieved is by shared storybook reading including culturally based stories. Inglebret et al. 2008 found that shared story book reading in American Indian and Alaska Native children served as a foundation for bridging high-context communication patterns and oral traditions with the low-context discourse expected in the classroom. Shared storybook reading allowed the children to practice their techniques used within their classroom. Valuing the client's identity can also be achieved by including cultural and/or heritage holidays and traditions that the client celebrates. Cycyk et al. 2021 stated, "Clinicians who take strides to involve families in endeavors to enhance the cultural and linguistic validity of the interventions they receive are upholding legal and ethical mandates to provide family-centered services that are responsive to families' backgrounds and likely to improve child and family outcomes (pg. 1242)." This is a thought to keep in mind, as well as the overall goal, when preparing and administering therapeutic services to our diverse clients.

Conclusion:

The purpose of this poster was to encourage future and current speech-language pathologists to consider their approach when working with clients of diverse backgrounds Consider:

- What are the challenges stemming from a lack of preparedness to serve diverse populations? What is my level of cultural competence?
- What assessments are available to learn about my level of cultural competence?
- How will I initiate and develop relationships with individuals from backgrounds that differ from my own?
- How and in what ways can I value my client's identity?
- Lastly, what would my sundae look like?

Let's challenge ourselves within our field of work to construct sundaes that allow us to identify limitations, engage in self-reflection, foster relationship building strategies, and change our views to value the identities of clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This is one of many ways that we can ensure we are providing individualized, effective, and efficient therapeutic services to each client.

Resources & Assessments



References

