



ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH, INC

Anita Foeman, Ph.D. and Nate Terrell, LCSW

856-223-0606; nateterrell@verizon.net

www.organizationalgrowth.org

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE CROSS-CULTURAL CLINICAL WORK

Developed by Nate Terrell, LCSW and Anita Foeman, Ph.D.

- 1) Develop a high comfort level with clients from other cultures through cross-cultural exposure, cultural education and the elimination of all cultural bias, prejudice, etc.
- 2) Use knowledge of other cultures to better understand rather than to predict a client's behaviors, attitudes, etc.
- 3) Do not act like you know more than you do about a given culture since clients may perceive this to be paternalistic. Instead, be open about what you do not understand and allow your clients be your teacher. This allows you to gain cultural insight from "inside out" rather than "outside in."
- 4) Recognize how your beliefs, perspectives, etc. are influenced by your own cultural heritage and/or experiences and be careful not to assume that your clients share your worldview.
- 5) Understand the dynamics that often occur between minority and majority group members.
- 6) When you sense that it is appropriate (trust your gut), use questions to identify and resolve any issues that arise as a result of the cross-cultural clinical context. You gain therapeutic credibility when you demonstrate sensitivity to cultural factors.
- 7) Know that it often takes longer to build trust, rapport and mutual understanding when you are working with clients from different cultures.
- 8) Once you have established a working relationship with your clients, do not be afraid to take calculated cultural risks that have the potential to significantly increase mutual understanding and/or client growth. Effective cross-cultural clinical work almost always involves some risk-taking.
- 9) Assess the impact of cultural factors on the problem/problems presented by clients through careful questioning and incorporate this assessment into their treatment plan.
- 10) Recognize the role cultural identity plays in motivating or hindering change.
- 11) Maintain balance and perspective when discussing cultural issues. Many clinicians either ignore culture or make cultural issues larger than they really are.
- 12) Use culturally relevant clinical approaches and recognize that personality theories are culture-bound rather than inherently objective.

