

Diversity and Multiculturalism in the Counseling Profession

Understanding the need for a broader perspective and thinking framework

Multiculturalism

- What is it?
- Why is it important to us?
- Why do we care?

What is it?

- Diversity
 - Differences, unlikenesses, variety.
 - To be competent, counselors must learn to deal effectively with diversity (e.g., culture, age, gender).
- Multicultural Counseling (from your text)
 - *Encompasses all the components of the many different cultural environments in a democratic society, together with the pertinent theories, techniques, and practices of counseling. Thus, this approach takes into specific consideration the traditional and contemporary backgrounds and environmental experiences of diverse clients and how special needs might be identified and met through resources of the helping professions.*

Color Blindness

- “I see everyone the same; I treat everyone the same.”
- What’s wrong with this view?
- What are the risks of this approach to clients?

The Zone

- The Zone?
 - That special place in our society comprised of members of the dominant culture which sets the standard for the greater society
- Whose in the zone?
- Those in the zone enjoy a degree of privilege and power not experienced (to varying degrees) by those outside the zone
 - Those in the zone (or perceived by others to be in the zone) must be particularly sensitive when working with those out of the zone to understand that life is different in the zone than out of the zone.

Why do we care?

- In order to be effective in our work with clients, we must be able to reach those clients where they are.
- We must understand that there are a variety of differences in the human experience that greatly affect that persons’ experience, and we must be careful not to judge others or impose our values on others based upon our own personal world view.
- It’s not about race
 - We must understand that all counseling encounters are multicultural encounters, and not all are readily noticeable. We must be aware of this with every encounter.
