Improving Relationships Through Understanding One Another
NCERA 216

Dr. Debra Bolton
Extension Specialist
Kansas State University
Purpose
• Define cultural patterns
• Cultural patterns and their affect on communication
• Self-Identification of biases that interfere with communication
• Helps to improve comfort in building cross-cultural relationships
What’s In Your Name

• Pick your first, middle, or last name
• Does it have a story?
• How does it relate to your identity?
• Tell us about it.
What is Diversity?

• Difference
• Human
• Physical
• Belief Systems
• Geography
• Intellectual
• Language
Remember:

There is more difference between members of any ONE groups that there is across any two groups.
What is Culture?

- Lens through which we see the world
- Lets us know how to act within that realm
- Human identity
- All humans belong to a culture
- Belief systems
- Historical allegiances

- Name a cultural practice from ancestor
What is your culture?

Please Share...
Yes, Tonto, I agree that it is yet another Hollywood-perpetuated Native American stereotype — but WHAT DOES IT SAY?
The Questions of Cultural Patterns

1. Human nature?
2. Humankind to nature?
3. Time orientation?
4. Value placed on activity?
5. Relationship of people to each other?
Across Cultures – Human Nature

**Basically Evil**
- Intrinsically Evil
- Puritan Ancestry
- Have moved toward good/evil
- Extreme: humans can’t be trusted...

**Mixture of Good/Evil**
- Taoists (yin/yang)
- Cannot eliminate: natural part of world
- Dual approach

**Basically Good**
- Extreme: Buddhism/Confucianism
- People are good: culture makes evil
- Fate vs. intellect
Across Cultures: Humans & Nature

Subjugated
- Powerful forces outside of control
- Stoically accept
- “not that it matters”

Harmony
- Part of life
- Not a hostile force
- American Indn
- “mother earth”
- “All things connect”

Master of Nature
- Conquer/direct to our advantage
- “Tame it”
- Clear separation from nature?
- Dominance of space
- Structuring of Markets
- Buyer influence
Across Cultures: Time Orientation

Past:
- History
- Traditions
- Religion
- Ancestors
- Guide future

Present:
- Future is vague
- “We don’t know the future/not that interested in the past”
- Real exists here and now

Future:
- U.S. Dominant
- What is going to happen
- Control future?
Across Cultures: Activity Orientation

Being:
- People/events/ideas flow spontaneously
- Work for the moment
- Simple act of conversation

Being-in-Becoming:
- Development & growth
- Spiritual life
- Emotional vitality

Doing:
- Accomplishments measured
- Activity & Action
- Dominant in U.S.
- Not as much patience to “sit & talk”
- Life in constant motion
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authoritarian:</th>
<th>Collective:</th>
<th>Individual:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “Born to lead”</td>
<td>• Group most important</td>
<td>• U.S. Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Others must follow</td>
<td>• Often passive</td>
<td>• “equal rights”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Widespread perception that it is the “norm”</td>
<td>• “Don’t draw attention to oneself”</td>
<td>• Control over one’s destiny</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• All else “violates will of God”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What else does this mean?

- Semantics
- Geographical Regions
- Culture (ethnic, socio-economic, religion, etc.)
- Gender
- Mother tongue
- Discipline (job)
- Family
What are your cultural patterns?
Personal Biases

• We like what we know
• We judge the world around us based on what we know
• We can to look at difference as “wrong”
• We can to take it “personally.”
• “It’s hard to look at others objectively.”
Tolerance Scale

- Appreciation
- Acceptance
- Tolerance
- Avoidance
- Repulsion

  - (Marofsky, 2008)
So, there was this American Indian, Syrian, Sudanese, Turk, and Iraqi riding around in the Middle East...
Judgment Language

• “They are not like us.”
• “They don’t have our values.”
• “We invited them, but they’re not interested, so they don’t come.”
• “They just don’t care about doing better.”
• “We need to show them how it’s done.”
“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

-- George Bernard Shaw, Irish Playwright and Likable Curmudgeon
Cross-Cultural Communication

• “Did you say what I think you said?”
• Generational
• “How do you ‘hear’ me?”
• What factors might impede communication?
  – Let’s discuss...
New words in Lexicon
What are the challenges?

- Do you understand yourself?
- Do you try to make others’ ideas fit with yours?
- How does that work?
- What can we do to make it better?
- Let’s discuss some ideas
Advantages

• Cultural pluralism
• Integration
• Cohesive communities
Build Relationships

• Volunteer your time
• Be deliberate about learning from others
• Put a human face on those you don’t understand or fear
• Be an empiricist
• Remember that difference is just difference
• Observe *mindful* value comparisons
It’s the *mindful* value comparisons...
Questions?
References

Deen, M. Y. Extension Youth and Family Specialist, Wenatchee, Washington mdeen@wsu.edu