

Cultivating Cross-Cultural Competence in Legal Practice

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Our Agenda

Define Cultural Competency & Its Practice

Share examples of approaches that work



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Culture

Professions have culture
Organizations have culture
Individuals have their own culture

Shapes how we interact and interpret one another



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Cultural Competence

Awareness of the Role Culture Plays
Knowledge about Cultural Concepts specific and general
Motivation & Commitment

Skills

Analytical to see & problem solve issues
Communication to bridge differences
Reflection to learn from the experience



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Cultural Competence

a commitment to antidiscrimination - professional and moral duty.

Access to Justice

Individual Justice

Community Justice



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Ten Commandments of Cultural Competence

The Guiding Principles of Client Service

By Lillian Moy

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York



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THANK YOU SUE BRYANT!

The Ten Commandments are taken from
“The Five Habits: Building Cross-Cultural Competence
in Lawyers”

By Professor Susan Bryant of CUNY Law School
8 Clinical L.Rev. 1 (2001).



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I

Know Thyself ... as a Cultural Being

Cultural Identities
Subject to change and
contradictions
Culture is like the air we breathe
Similarities and differences



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II Listen, Listen, Listen

Deeply
Focus on content, not style
On words and non-words
Non-verbal behavior



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III Learn What You Don't Know



Training and information on general concepts and specific culture



IV But Never, Ever Stereotype

No single characteristic fully defines you or your client's culture

Make gentle use of knowledge

Focus on gathering facts



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V Stop, Look and Reflect

Develop capacity to debrief and reflect



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VI Avoid Judgments

Parallel universes
Imagine multiple possible meanings



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VII R-E-S-P-E-C-T



Avoid stereotype
Client's values, not ours



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VIII Talk About It!

We have to be willing to talk about issues of difference
and issues of similarity
Strategize about it



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IX Stay Awake

Pitfalls, red flags and remedies



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X

Honor Thyself ... As a Human Being

Decrease stress so that bias and stereotype are less likely to govern.



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Problem Solving: Using Culture as Framework

Identify a problem:

- Outcomes
- People served
- People we find "difficult"

Apply a culture lens

- If culture plays a role in problem or solution?
- How do we explore/solve
- Resources



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Resources

National Language Advocates Network,
<http://www.probono.net/nlaan>

National Fellows website
<http://www.probono.net/fellows>

LAAC, APALC

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