

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

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Abstract: *This text is devoted to cultural and ethnic differences, which in direct interaction of social support affect the quality of care in both residential and the outpatient social services. The aim of the text is to highlight the possibility of conflicts resulting from low cultural sensitivity, which is usually characterized by a reluctance to learn, to empathy and to deal new approaches with the client. It is essential to change the status quo and prepare for the future, aware of the worker's professional competence, the need to learn and be under the cross-cultural supervision.*

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Culturally different groups are often disadvantaged or they have not been given assistance by their ideas for reasons of different features, specific cultural perceptions, expectations and last but not least socialization. Misunderstanding of cultural values and consequences has the resulted as a conflict in the client's expectations of help and the helping worker.

Conflict of value and conflict in the understanding of normality among the young, physically strong, actively assisting person and the person who is helped, mostly in the negative (opposition) psychophysical mood, it is the most common obstacle conflict in helping process. (Baštecká, 2005)

No individual or family can prevent the accident or the need of help. On such persons from different cultural backgrounds, this need may to fall such dramatically. They are particularly vulnerable by misunderstanding of local realities and other factors such as:

Unemployment both ethnically different persons look for work with more difficulties due to mistrust of employers (unless they are the assistant workers), and this is due to legislation such as the applicants for international protection can work up after 12 months of the written request (Act No 325/1999 Coll.).

Changing of gender roles and thus change in psychosocial well-being, as women can find work faster than men from conservative cultures, where their pride does not allow them to accept to certain professions.

Intergenerational conflict - The second generation of migrants differs from the first one mainly in the contacts and interaction with peers of home culture, while the first generation is characterized by closed attitude to the outside world and maintaining of their traditions. An example may be a new term "banana children" (Duong Nguyen, 2008) on the surface of yellow colour, inside white. It is the second generation of the Vietnamese who attend the Czech schools and fully adapted to the Czech environment and they see their future here, especially by school success supported by parents of Confucian philosophy.

School and social failure - Misunderstanding of cultural and linguistic contexts leads to conflicts in the society, particularly the failure of expectations in the form of giggling and laughter, siding, bullying, etc. coming from maintained, opposition roles.

Methods of education are very different especially in the Muslim cultures, where children are encouraged to be independent and their own personality. Especially in boy's education, it is inconceivable any shouting or punishment. At persons who have undergone or they bring up children by the direct way, the behaviour and a "benevolent" action of the other parents can be seemed as inappropriate.

Values of living of persons who left the country where they were at risk of health or life, or they lost loved ones in battle, bloody clashes, the values of living were changed. In an environment of peace and tranquility, where they often lived with post-trauma, there is not important the career, paid rent, etc., but the life is the live, they just enjoy it ...

These factors then lead to deviant behaviour such as alcoholism, domestic violence, the creation of ethnically homogeneous groups with the aim to be aggressive towards majority society, to the fundamental interpretation of the faith, etc.

Perception of cultural and ethnic differences is often focused on the visible features such as colour of skin, a nose shape, specific movement and clothing. The majority groups often degrade these persons and marginalizing them already on the expectation of fulfilment of prejudice. People of minority groups often hide their differences and they are not able to adapt to the society, there is yet another subjective factor of abnormal behaviour.

It is therefore clear, that it is necessary for helping workers to increase their cultural empathy and effort to move away from ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is considered as evaluation of stranger behaviour and his/her value according to our rules which are recognized as only the appropriate and immutable. We expect from the foreigners that they receive the host culture without any objection. Cultural sensitivity is a delicate matter and the bias is never far away (Hofstede, 270).

The experts agree that the training of social workers should be in conformity with the ethics of the profession, namely in the respect for diversity. It is necessary to develop the ability to perceive, recognize and resolve ethical dilemmas in the context of ethical standards that are rooted in different cultures. Acquiring of ability to realize how, cultural differences affect the values and what role they play in decision making. It is necessary to identify gaps in our knowledge of different groups and not just ethnic, but also generational or social.

Cultural sensitivity can be made clear when the necessary information, methodological was of aid are translated into languages, which users of the service understand well (Baštická, 2005).

Great symbolic value has food, and it creates a community. It is culturally insensitive to "fed" users by something that they do not know or they do not want, instead of what they use, what they appreciate (Baštická, 2005). The Administration of Refugee Facilities realized this. It gradually enforced self-cooking of accommodated asylum seekers, such as the Word 21 organizations, which arranges reciprocal dinners of ethnically diverse persons established in the Czech Republic and the Czech citizens. From my own experience I can confirm that asylum seekers never bought Czech pastry, but always bought packages of flour and baked their own bread.

Recently media held a scandal over lost dogs and their later culinary cooking up. Suspicion fell on people of the Asian origin. This controversy raised in our country. Should be here our cultural norms and habits for the Chinese and Vietnamese cuisine or the habits of foreign diners? (Psychology Today 10, 2008).

We hate eating of dogs, on the other hand, it is obviously a cultural issue. Similarly, the Muslims do not understand how anyone could eat unclean pig, the Hindus can not give a bad look to a cow.

Similarly, it is insensitive to come up to such persons with the Euro-Christian models of medical, social or psychotherapeutic assistance. Thus, the staff is expected to increase the empathy and a wider attitude to finding and learning. This means that these workers are active and creative in their work and they do not rely only on repetition of formulas, "you must, you must not." It is necessary to actively appreciate cultural diversity and to led dialogue across differences and ideas, to explore and realize the differences in the relationship of helping person - the client (Hawkins, 2004).

Understanding of culture in the links to the client must also include the understanding of our own cultural conditions and beliefs that we have acquired by education. Thus we prevent the barrier of ethnocentrism, because the education and culture particularly are affected by a way how we think.

Hawkins created a model of five levels of culture, each level is significantly influenced by levels lying below it. It is necessary to mention this model when we work with clients and be aware of how much the client is willing to chose some of his/her certainty. This model can be thought as an onion, where the top skins are affected by those of the bottom. We can say that the top skin are superficial and can be easily changed, but the more is being peeled and closed to the heart, more of the levels are stable and unchanging. These are the following levels:

Ariefacts - such as rituals, customs, symbols, buildings, art, etc. thus the factors that can be changed by the new, when they are sufficiently attractive for the individuals.

Behaviour - models of relationships and behaviour, cultural norms. Even those can be easy to learn, changed for the original ones.

Setting of the mind – a way of looking at the world and the creation of attitudes based on experience. Attitudes are emotionally coloured responses to certain stimulis, they can no longer be easily changed, it is the level that is being changed very little.

Emotional basis - patterns of feeling creating a sense of things.

Motivational roots – the fundamental aspirations influencing personal choices (Hawkins, 2004).

The client in a foreign environment is much more susceptible to a number of initiatives which, in a familiar cultural and social environment, does not see as something different or special. The assisting staff should recognize this in contact with a member of other culture and follow series of generally applicable recommendations:

- Make enough time for foreigners, do not try to settle the matter "as quickly as possible."
- Take in account the language and cultural barriers, consider the possible prejudices on both sides, also on the own side.
- Speak slowly, clearly articulate, do not to increase the voice. Use simple sentences, avoid the difficult and long sentences.
- It is good to learn a basic greeting in the language of the client at least. It shows the interest to that person.

- If it is not clear what the foreigner wanted to say, let him/her to repeat the problem again, or in other words.
- Let the foreigners to explain his/her view of the problem.
- Listen to him/her with sympathy and try to understand his/her view of the problem. Estimate even the reasons that it is likely lead to it. Explain your views on the debated issue and present the facts.
- Point out the foreigners' consensus and differences in his/her and your opinion and discuss all differences in details.
- Recommend the most appropriate way to solve the problem with regard to ethical, ethnic and cultural difficulties of foreigners. A moderate level of compromise from both sides is better than the escalation of disagreements, ridicule, threats, or open conflict with all serious consequences.
- The rule is that when there is the facial expression or tone of voice in conflict with words, a listener usually understands and accepts what is communicated by non-verbally way (www.internimedica.cz).

In the global world and the increasing migration and thus the demand for social assistance of clients from different cultures, there is growing demand for the competence of social workers to work across cultures and help by high quality, non-discriminatory way. When working with clients from different cultures it is important to understand that the helping worker is not culturally neutral and realize this. Every person is anchored in his/her culture, in which has been socialized. To be able to work competently with people from different cultures, we must understand our own culture.

The concept of diversity is understood as the differences, but it also has wider importance of the concept, which aims is to create the conditions in a civil society, that enable to everyone, regardless of difference, to develop their full individual potential and to take account it in the individual planning. Furthermore, the aim is also to increase respect and understanding for each others diversity and to minimize any form of discrimination.

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