



Innovations in Counseling: Working with Minority Populations- Part 2 Understanding Diversity in Teaching and Program Evaluation

Webinar Follow-up Question and Answer Session with Dr. Dansby-Giles and Dr. Phil Clarke

Question from Elena Yee

I'm currently a graduate student and I typically find myself being the lone student of color in class. Also all the faculty except for one are White. The faculty try to incorporate diversity, which I appreciate but it seems that students tend to not respond to questions about privilege, power, and -isms. As student of color, what is the extent my responsibility regarding cultural competence for my peers and myself and even for faculty?

Answer from Presenter

Since your status as a student in a counseling program was not identified such as a master's level or doctoral level student or enrollment in practicum and internship, I will address your concerns in a general way. Also, I do not know anything about the history of your program or the daily interactions between students and professors and the history of diversity within the community in which the university is located. This information may assist you in understanding the reluctance of your peers to respond to issues related to diversity. Gloria and Pope-Davis have recommended the practice of cultural ambience that promotes respect of diversity within the daily operation of counselor training programs.

Burton and Furr (2014) have indicated that conversations related to multiculturalism or diversity may be difficult for some individuals. In addition, they may need to feel that they are in a safe environment when discussing diversity. I do not know if this is the case in your situation, but it can be a consideration.

According to the ACA Code of Ethics (2014), concerns related to supervision, training and teaching are identified in Section F. This section addresses students or supervisees in sections F.4.c Standards for Supervisees, F.5.a Student and Supervisee Ethical Responsibilities, F.5.b. Impairment, F.5.c Professional Disclosure, F.8.a Student Welfare- Program Information and Orientation, F.8.d Addressing Personal Concerns, F.9.a- Evaluation of Students, F.9.c. Counseling for Students and F.11.b. Student Diversity.

Beginning with F.5.a. Ethical Responsibilities, students and supervisees are required to comply with the ACA Code of Ethics and have the same responsibilities to clients as counselors. In terms of applying student responsibilities within multiculturalism, Section A- Introduction states: " Counselors actively attempt to understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of the clients they serve. Counselors also explore their own cultural identities and how these affect their values and beliefs about the counseling process" (p. 4).

Based upon Section F of the ACA Code of Ethics, it appears that your responsibility regarding cultural competence is at the individual level and each student and professor within the program has an individual responsibility to comply with the Code of Ethics.

Section F.8.a. Program Information and Orientation may be helpful in that it clarifies that the types of information and skills that students must possess in order to complete the training program, requirements for self-growth or self-disclosure as well as evaluation and dismissal policies. If these issues have not been



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discussed with you or provided in written student publications, be sure to check to see what the expectations of the program may be for students.

Also, the NBCC Code of Ethics (2012) addresses ethically competent behavior at the individual level. It states: “NCCs shall demonstrate multicultural competence and shall not use techniques that discriminate against or show hostility towards individuals or groups based on gender, ethnicity, race, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion or any other legally prohibited basis” (p. 3).

Question from Carmen Gutierrez

I would like to know if there has been a focus or consideration of including the teaching of how to be culturally sensitive to the dominant culture. It has been my experience, as a Latina, that the multicultural classes are not addressing sensitivity to the dominant Caucasian culture. A running theme taught in the class is that the Caucasian groups “have no culture.” This is confusing to me because I believe that all individuals have “culture” whether they express it on a daily basis or not. This ideology, in my opinion, seems to create a separation in itself. Can you share your thoughts on this?

Answer from Presenter

There has been a continuing theme of respecting diversity of all cultures that has been articulated by ACA as well as NBCC. The Preamble of the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) has identified five core values. These are:

1. enhancing human development throughout the life span;
2. honoring diversity and embracing a multicultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts;
3. promoting social justice;
4. safeguarding the integrity of the counselor-client relationship; and
5. practicing in a competent and ethical manner (p. 3).

The NBCC Code of Ethics (2012) expressed a similar theme in statement # 26. It stated: “NCCs shall demonstrate multicultural competence and shall not use techniques that discriminate against or show hostility towards individuals or groups based on gender, ethnicity, race, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion or any other legally prohibited basis” (p. 3)

With regard to the role of counselor educators, it has been recommended that counselor educators continue to be alert in responding to the reactions of trainees to diversity within instructional settings since trainees may perceive multicultural instructional strategies differently as a result of life experiences or backgrounds (Dickson, Argus-Calvo & Tafoya, 2010).

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