



PRACTICING CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Practicing cultural responsiveness is: 1) the ongoing process of learning how the values, beliefs, attitudes and traditions that grow from racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, disability status, or other affiliate groups contribute to our own and other people's culture; 2) learning about personal circumstances, conditions, and experiences that influence our own and other people's thinking, behaviors, and roles in their communities; 3) being mindful of the power and privilege differences and similarities between individuals and among groups of people; and 4) using this knowledge to work effectively with all people.

In the context of Young Adult Peer Mentoring, using lived experience with purpose and intent to practice cultural responsiveness also means:

- » Sharing aspects of the YAPM's own lived experience without assumptions about how it is the same or different from the experience of other young adults;
- » Specifically acknowledging and discussing how the challenges that young adults have faced may be similar or different from those of the YAPM;
- » Exploring ways in which different experiences in the mental health/child welfare system and/or other traumatic situations influence the world view, attitudes, and behaviors of young adults;
- » Discovering differences in views of mental health in the cultures of young adults' family members and other significant figures in their lives and working to bridge gaps in understanding;
- » Demonstrating an understanding of "youth" culture based on young adult exposure to contemporary conditions, technology, social media, expressive language, and other cultural markers that are significantly different from the previous generation; and
- » Mutual exploration between YAPMs and YAs to identify developing cultural values and meaning as they (both YAPM and other young adults) transition to adulthood.

CULTURAL SELF-ASSESSMENT AS PART OF PEER MENTORING

IDEAL PRACTICE

DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICE

INSUFFICIENT PRACTICE

Takes an inventory of and gains understanding of YAPM's own values, beliefs, and attitudes to prepare for work with each YA.

- * Takes an initial inventory of values but does not follow up over time.
- * Considers cultural groups (e.g., race, religion, etc.) but not individual culture (values, beliefs, attitudes).

Makes no effort at self-awareness.

Takes responsibility for getting rid of assumptions and committing to ongoing learning about similarities and differences among YAs, as described in definition.

- * Avoids articulating their own prejudices and judgments (even when aware).
- * Partial or inconsistent attempts to learn.

- * Accepts their own prejudices without effort to understand the basis of those prejudices or those of others.
- * Relies only on their own experience of culture without exploring or understanding others.

Before working with each YA, carefully considers similarities and differences in lived experience of mental health challenges, to prepare for possible self-disclosure about cultural issues with purpose and intent.

- * Focuses on similarities only or with inconsistent or minimal discovery of differences of lived experience.
- * Discloses about themselves without considering how to handle the possible reactions of YA.

Discloses about themselves without considering purpose and intent.

While working with YAs, acknowledges any privilege that may come from role as YAPM and/or race, class, or other categories.

Avoids discussing privilege.

Denies any difference in privilege.

OVERCOMING PRACTICAL BARRIERS

IDEAL PRACTICE

Invites each YA to share their identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc.).

Asks about YA's (and family's) preferred language for communication and makes best efforts to accommodate language needs and prevent communication barriers.

Asks about, models (names own preference), and uses preferred gender pronouns for each YA.

Identifies and acts on any practical concerns about meeting times and locations that relate to culture (for example, holy days, family privacy boundaries, childcare needs, public exposure, etc.).

Works with the YA to determine the best ways to communicate via new media and uses the YA's preferred media as much as possible.

DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICE

- * Asks YA to share but does not create space for sharing.
- * Asks about culture without exploring deeper aspects of culture categories; neglects to explore YA's individual relationship to culture (values, beliefs, attitudes).
- * Only has conversations that are comfortable; avoids difficult subjects.

- * Assumes preferred language for communication but accepts a change if brought up by the YA.
- * Asks about language but does not act to overcome barriers (if any).

Neglects to ask about gender pronouns but accepts requests if brought up by the YA.

- * Asks about culture but does not follow through on resolving cultural barriers.
- * Uses flexible meeting times and places but is not proactive about cultural considerations.

Uses YAPM's preferred communication without making sure that it works for YA.

INSUFFICIENT PRACTICE

- * Ignores YA's identities.
- * Assumes they know YA's identity.
- * Makes derogatory/offensive judgments about culture groups.

Makes no effort to communicate in YA's preferred language.

Deliberately refuses to use preferred gender pronouns identified by the YA, if they do not match the YAPM's choice.

Makes no accommodations on meeting times or places.

- * Makes no effort to communicate.
- * Ignores preferred media with no discussion.

YOUNG ADULT CULTURE DISCOVERY

IDEAL PRACTICE

Invites discussion and explores, over time, with the YA their unique values, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, life experiences, and family environment.

Invites discussion, over time, about values and beliefs that are influenced by cultural identity/family environment.

With YAs who are young parents, explores cultural contexts for parenting roles and identity as young parents.

Specifically explores their perspective as young adults and how their age influences cultural norms (e.g., use of technology, acceptance of differences, peer groups etc.).

Explores risks and strengths that come from their culture.

DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICE

- * Asks about values and beliefs but does not follow up or explore further.
- * Engages in insufficient or superficial exploration.

- * Asks about values and beliefs without relating them to culture and environment.
- * Discusses these issues at the start but not over time.

- * Asks about parenting issues without relating them to culture and environment.
- * Discusses these issues at the start but not over time.

Identifies and understands young adult perspectives but does not explore family/cultural context or differences.

Asks about culture without exploring risks and strengths related to culture.

INSUFFICIENT PRACTICE

- * Does not acknowledge or discuss individual culture.
- * Disrespects the YA's unique values, beliefs, attitudes.
- * Disrespects family environment/culture.

Does not acknowledge impact of family environment/culture on the YA.

- * Does not consider the impact of parenting.
- * Makes negative judgments about young parents.

Ignores the impact of the YA's view of culture (e.g., family conflict).

- * Ignores risks that the YA describes as part of culture.
- * Does not consider (or disrespects) strengths that come from culture.

YOUNG ADULT CULTURE DISCOVERY

IDEAL PRACTICE

Shares self-disclosure with purpose and intent regarding issues of age, culture, life challenges, and self-discovery.

DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICE

Discloses about themselves without considering how to handle possible reactions of the YA.

INSUFFICIENT PRACTICE

Discloses about themselves without considering purpose and intent.

COMMUNITY CULTURE DISCOVERY

Develops awareness of the culture of the YA's neighborhood/community environment (e.g., available resources, economic conditions, level of harmony or tension, etc.) and impact on the YA's culture and wellbeing.

- * Is partially or superficially aware of the neighborhood/community.
- * Understands resources, tensions, etc. in the community but does not explore impact on the YA's wellbeing.

- * Ignores community environment.
- * Brings biases into the community environment.
- * Makes no effort to learn about resources or other aspects of the neighborhood.

Explores the impact on YAs of immigration-related separations (if any) from community or family and/or other relevant displacements (homeless shelter, foster home placement).

- * Is aware of separations and displacements due to immigration but not comfortable exploring.
- * Unable to connect immigration-related separations with their own experience of displacements (if any).

Makes no effort to learn about immigration separations, displacements, or other stresses.

Shares self-disclosure (as appropriate) with purpose and intent regarding their experience of different living situations.

Discloses about themselves without considering how to handle possible reactions of the YA.

Discloses about themselves without considering purpose and intent.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AMONG FAMILY MEMBERS AND ALLIES

IDEAL PRACTICE

Opens discussion of differences and similarities in culture as related to family members, other adult allies, and roles of each; pays attention to issues that may come up as a result of differences in role definition.

Shares self-disclosure (as appropriate) with purpose and intent regarding family differences in culture and how the differences affect lived experience.

DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICE

- * Considers cultural differences and similarities only superficially.
- * Discusses only with some family or allies (or only with youth).
- * Asks questions but does not use responses to guide work.

Discloses about themselves without considering how to handle possible reactions of the YA.

INSUFFICIENT PRACTICE

- * Makes assumptions based on stereotypes.
- * Considers only negative implications of cultural differences or similarities.

Discloses about themselves without considering purpose and intent.

STRENGTHS IN CONTEXT OF CULTURE

Engages in ongoing discussion about strengths that result from their overall cultural identity as well as youth culture (e.g., music, dance and other forms of self-expression, slang and new uses of words, technology as primary communication, trends in clothing, and emerging shared beliefs).

Engages in ongoing discussion about strengths that come from their experience of mental health challenges.

- * Discusses strengths at the start only.
- * Superficial discussion only without applying to the work.

- * Discusses strengths and mental health in general ways not individualized to each YA.
- * Explores strengths but not resources that can build on strengths.

- * Does not acknowledge strengths.
- * Focuses only on negative aspects of cultural identity.

Does not acknowledge that strengths can come from the experience of mental health challenges.

STRENGTHS IN CONTEXT OF CULTURE

IDEAL PRACTICE

Helps YAs to recognize and “discover” strengths in their cultural background and shares potential strengths even when YAs cannot identify strengths.

Shares self-disclosure (as appropriate) with purpose and intent regarding strengths that have come from lived experience.

DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICE

Asks about strengths that come from culture but does not explore further to “discover” strengths.

Discloses about themselves without considering how to handle possible reactions of the YA.

INSUFFICIENT PRACTICE

Does not consider strengths.

Discloses about themselves without considering purpose and intent.

BELIEFS ABOUT TREATMENT

Explores beliefs and attitudes regarding physical health, mental health, substance use, medication, diagnoses, and other therapies.

Specifically validates each YA's experience of the mental health, child welfare, and other systems and how this has shaped beliefs and attitudes.

- * Asks about some, but not all, treatment experiences.
- * Struggles to openly address some beliefs and/or cultures.
- * Listens for stigma or other negative responses to treatment without listening fully to possible positives.

- * Validates experiences some, but not all, of the time.
- * Validates experiences but does not connect to culture (beliefs, attitudes).

- * Uses their own lived experience of negatives with too much detail about what went wrong.
- * Expresses bias and absolutes about what can or cannot help.

Dismisses the YA's experience.

BELIEFS ABOUT TREATMENT

IDEAL PRACTICE

Uses self-disclosure (as appropriate) with purpose and intent to discuss beliefs and values about treatment options.

DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICE

- * Discloses about themselves without considering how to handle possible reactions of the YA.
- * Focuses too much on their own experience of treatment to state what will or will not help, without considering the YA's circumstances.

INSUFFICIENT PRACTICE

- * Discloses about themselves without considering purpose and intent.
- * Overshares personal negative experience with treatment.

ADDRESSING CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Invites and supports YAs to address cultural misunderstandings with providers.

Struggles to know when or how to address cultural misunderstandings.

- * Avoids discussion of cultural misunderstandings.
- * Takes sides behind the scenes in addressing misunderstandings.

Addresses directly and respectfully (in tone of voice and words) with others when observing actions that appear insensitive to YA's culture or lived experience.

- * Tries to handle anger or other difficult emotions directly but sometimes engages in negative talk.
- * Struggles to handle cultural insensitivity in team meetings.

- * Ignores and/or agrees with cultural insensitivity.
- * Uses sarcasm, name-calling, or other rude negative reactions to insensitivity.
- * Reprimands others.

Models effective advocacy around cultural differences.

Advocates some, but not all, of the time for cultural openness around differences.

Does not advocate for themselves or recommends "letting it go" when others are demeaning about culture.

Promptly acknowledges and corrects peer YAPM's actions that suggest cultural bias or misunderstanding.

- * Still learning to address/admit mistakes without defensiveness.
- * Acknowledges mistakes but does not effectively correct them.

"Freaks out" when challenged or corrected.