Culturally Informed Psychotherapy

**41st Annual Cross Cultural Conference-
Forging Solutions out of Challenges**

Myrtle Beach, SC
February 22, 2019
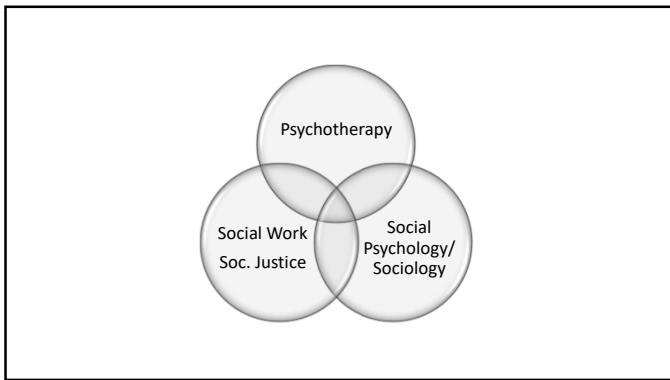
Mark Nickerson, LICSW
markinickerson@gmail.com
culturalcompetenceEMDR.com
markinickerson.com

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Cultural Competence and EMDR Therapy

The quest for *cultural competence*
is
a *journey* not a destination.

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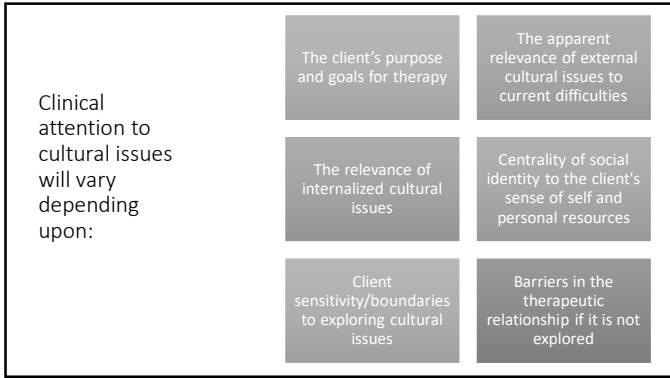|	Cultural Competence Goals for Mental Health Practitioners
Understand	Understand the importance of culture and of framing individual client issues within a cultural context
Understand	Understand the important dimensions of culture and social identity specific to each client (including norms, values, beliefs, needs, etc.)
Maintain	Maintain an attitude of humility while being aware of and seeking to overcome one's own cultural bias

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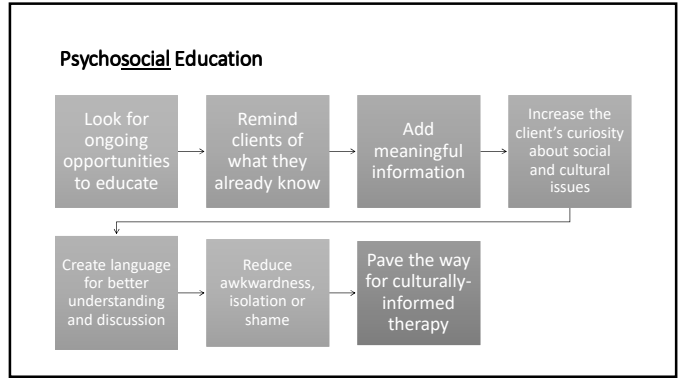|	Cultural Competence Goals for Mental Health Practitioners
Adapt	Adapt methods to a client's cultural context and needs
Educate and empower	Educate and empower clients to be culturally aware, as appropriate
Implement	Implement interventions that treat the internalized effects of culturally-based trauma

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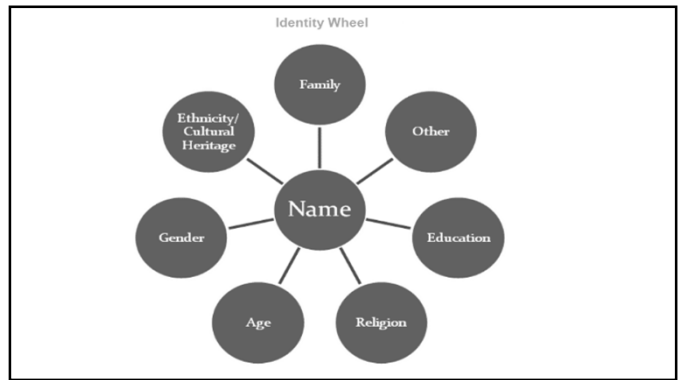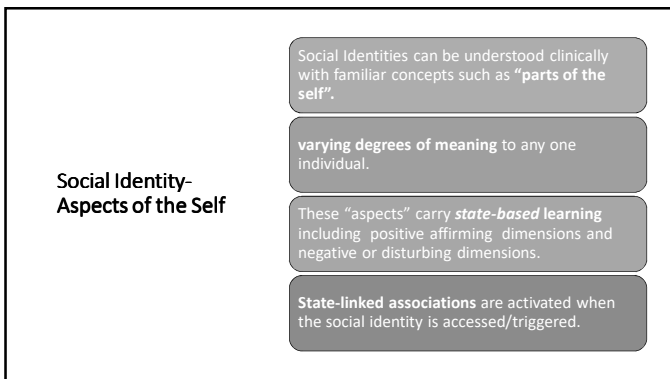|	Cultural Competence Goals for Mental Health Practitioners
Implement	Implement interventions that treat social prejudice and discriminatory behaviors
Support and ally	Support and ally with humanitarian efforts for social change including victim/survivor empowerment, social justice, and policy reform
Build and sustain	Build and sustain therapist organizations which support the cultural competence of practitioners and which are culturally competent organizations

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Clinical attention to cultural issues will vary depending upon:

The client's purpose and goals for therapy	The apparent relevance of external cultural issues to current difficulties
The relevance of internalized cultural issues	Centrality of social identity to the client's sense of self and personal resources
Client sensitivity/boundaries to exploring cultural issues	Barriers in the therapeutic relationship if it is not explored

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Psychosocial Education

Look for ongoing opportunities to educate → Remind clients of what they already know → Add meaningful information → Increase the client's curiosity about social and cultural issues

Create language for better understanding and discussion → Reduce awkwardness, isolation or shame → Pave the way for culturally-informed therapy

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Can I ask you some questions about your social and cultural experiences?

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Identity Wheel

Family
Ethnicity/Cultural Heritage
Other
Name
Gender
Education
Age
Religion

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Social Identity- Aspects of the Self

Social Identities can be understood clinically with familiar concepts such as **"parts of the self".**

varying degrees of meaning to any one individual.

These "aspects" carry *state-based* **learning** including positive affirming dimensions and negative or disturbing dimensions.

State-linked associations are activated when the social identity is accessed/triggered.

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Social Identity

What social or cultural groups are most important to you?

What are positive and negative qualities you associate with these groups?

Are there any cultural or social groups that others identify you with and how has that been for you?

Are there ways you can better understand yourself or the issues that brought you to therapy in a social/cultural context?

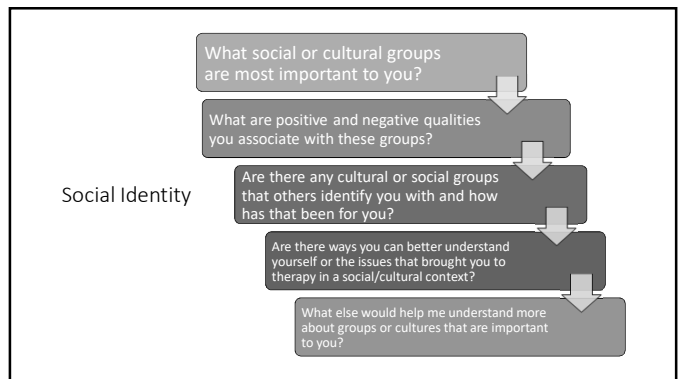What else would help me understand more about groups or cultures that are important to you?

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Social Identity Additional Questions:

- What are sources of pride and shame for your social groups?
- Have you ever had to hide your social identity?
- Consider introducing the Cultural Genogram.
- Consider introducing the Identity Circle.

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Social/Cultural Identity Exercise

Identify and list one to five personal social identities.

Social Identity _____

Good memory _____

Bad memory _____

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Social Trauma (discrimination, stigma/oppression)

- Have you ever felt seriously misunderstood or misjudged related to your social identity/culture?
- Are there ways in which you have been affected by discrimination, social stigma or oppression during your life?
- Do you have early memories of being avoided, shunned, ostracized, or devalued related to social dynamics?

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Social Trauma (discrimination, stigma/oppression)

- Do you have any early memories of being included or excluded from a group based upon your race/ethnicity, social class, gender, physical ability/appearance, etc.?
- Do you currently experience social microaggressions? (slurs, denigrating remarks, etc.)
- Have you had difficulties related to assimilating into another culture?

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Social Trauma

- What beliefs did you form about yourself as you were growing up that might be linked to your social experiences and/or culturally-based adversity?
- How have you handled socially based adversity?
- Do you avoid certain types of people? ...get upset by types of people? ....Feel powerless/ unsafe, inferior/superior related to types of people? ....have strong emotional or physiological reactions to types of people?

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Social Identity Development

Research affirms that developing a cohesive ethnic identity offers many potential gains including:

- General psychological self-esteem, happiness
- Decreased self-destructive behaviors
- Reduced risk that discrimination will lead to depression
- Greater family cohesion for adolescents

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Acculturalization
(Berry, 1984)

Integration: metaphor of a **salad bowl or tapestry**

2. Assimilation: metaphor *of a* **melting pot**

3. *Segregation/separation*: metaphor of a dividing wall
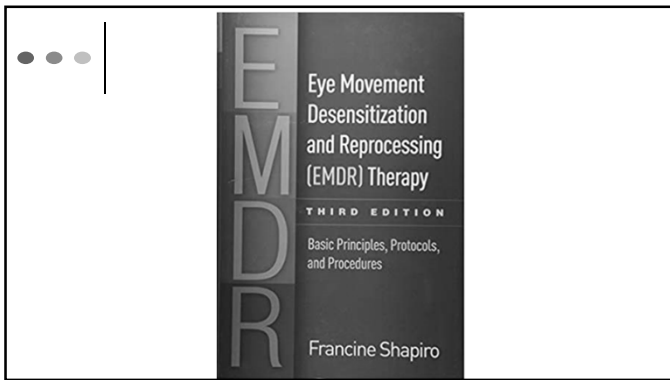
4. *Marginalization*: metaphor of invisibility

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Six Forms of Resource Capital

1. **Aspirational Capital** – hopes and dreams
2. **Linguistic Capital** – language skills their advantages
3. **Familial Capital** – family connection, support and culture
4. **Social Capital** – networks of connection
5. **Navigational Capital** – skills in navigating cultural challenges
6. **Spiritual Capital** – religious and spiritual practices and beliefs

Venkatraman-Levis (2017)

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Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy

THIRD EDITION

Basic Principles, Protocols, and Procedures

Francine Shapiro

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Innate Information Processing

• Traumatization has been described as the disruption of the inherent processing system that normally leads to integration and adaptive resolution following upsetting experiences. (van der Kolk, Fisler, 1995)

• Under normal circumstances, this information processing may occur during thinking, talking, expressive/artistic activities, and/or dreaming.

• In trauma, however, a malfunction of this natural information processing system occurs such that the experience of the trauma remains "frozen", manifesting in persistent intrusive thoughts, negative emotions and self-referenced beliefs, and unpleasant body sensations.

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Describing EMDR to a Client

• When a disturbing event occurs, it can get locked or frozen in the brain with the original pictures, sounds, thoughts, feelings and body sensations. Present day experiences can activate those original feelings, thoughts, images, sensations.

• EMDR seems to stimulate that frozen information and allows the brain to process the experience by connecting that stuck memory with other information in your brain.

• Similar to what may be happening in REM (rapid eye movement) sleep when we dream. The eye movements or other forms of bilateral stimulation (tones, taps) may help to process the unconscious material.

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EMDRIA
EMDR INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

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Trauma Storage and the Brain

Neocortex (Thinking Brain)

Limbic System (Emotional Brain)

Brain Stem (Physical Brain)

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Information Stored in an Unprocessed Memory

Triggers

Meaning of Event, Belief about Self (NC)

Images, Sounds, Smells, Taste, Feel

Trauma Memory

Thoughts

Emotions

Body Sensations

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During EMDR Processing

• Client internally generates "corrective information" about the event rather than that information being externally generated through discussion with therapist.

• Therapist does not reflect, interpret, reframe or intervene in other traditional ways
   • Client Centered - Follow the client's processing
   • Mindfulness – "Just notice", "Go with that"
   • Cognitive Interweaves – ask questions that link statements made by client and only when needed to move processing forward

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Information Processing

"Bilateral stimulation" or "Dual Attention Stimulus" is suspected of jumpstarting these limbic and physiological information processing systems.

Various forms of stimulation (visual, audio, and tactile) are being explored and researched.

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Describing EMDR to a Client

• **Access** the dysfunctionally stored information.

• **Stimulate** the information processing system and maintain it in a dynamic form.

• **Move** the information by monitoring the free association process and initiate procedures to facilitate adaptive (appropriate, positive, functional) resolution.

• **Desensitize**: Reduce the Subjective Unit of Distress (SUD) to 0.

• **Reprocess**: Learning takes place so client adapts their understanding of the event and shifts negative cognitions to positive cognitions.

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EMDR Resources

EMDR International Association | www.emdria.org

EMDR Institute | www.emdr.com

EMDR Research Foundation | www.emdrresearchfoundation.org

EMDR Humanitarian Assistance Program | www.emdrhap.org

EMDRadvancedtrainings.org

markinickerson.com

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CULTURALLY INFLUENCED BELIEFS

Socially-based dimension of core beliefs	State-based social identity beliefs	Internalized cultural messages
	Internalized stereotypes	Externalized Negative Beliefs

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Social Connection and Belonging
The innate human need for social connection and belonging includes needs for:

acceptance
appreciation
belonging
being "known" or "seen"
closeness
community
connection (social)
friendship

inclusion (social)
mutuality
partnership
shared realities
support
teammates/allies
trust (social)

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Socially-Based Negative Cognitions

The normal fulfillment of the need for **social connection and belonging** are violated by adverse social experiences including:

- Ostracism
- Exclusion
- Discrimination and oppression
- Stigmatization
- Other micro-aggressions

Violations in this domain create social insecurity and aloneness.

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Socially-Based Negative Beliefs

Negative Cognition	Positive Cognition
• I'm alone	I have others with me
• I don't belong	I do belong (inherently)
• I am disconnected	I can connect with others
• I'm an oddball/weirdo	I'm unique, as are all people (its OK)
• I'm a reject	I deserve respect and inclusion
• I'm an outsider	I'm worthy, I have my groups, I can join others

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Therapeutic Reframes

Be prepared to offer culturally aware interweaves
- Are there ways in which being a _____ (e.g. black man) may have impacted this situation?
- Do you think another woman/man in your position may have felt that way?
- When you look through a cultural lens, how do you view it?
- Do you think social forces came into play in this situation?
- Do you feel this was socially just?

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What does Stigma Look Like?

Ask, *What does stigma(or oppression) look like?* Elicit an abstract image from the client.

Target that image for reprocessing.

Follow associative channels. Anticipate that it may link into more narrative memory.

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State-Based Social Identity Cognitions

- *When you think of yourself as a (specific social identity) in relationship to (a person of another social identity, group, or the larger society), what memories come to mind?*

(If negative), ask:
- *What picture goes with that memory that represents the worst part? What words go with that picture that best describe your negative belief about yourself now?*

- Float back to identify other memories. Target identified memories for reprocessing.

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Finding Socially linked Negative Beliefs

Fill in the blank:

As a _____(e.g. woman, person raised poor), I am _____ (Negative Belief)

(e.g., not good enough, powerless, unsafe, invisible)

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Internalized Cultural Messages

No one cares about old people

Men shouldn't express emotions

Transgender people are dangerous

If you aren't thin, you aren't attractive

People should stay in their place (social position)

If you can't speak the language, be silent

One's value is based on how much one has/earns

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Internalized Cultural Messages
Exploratory questions:

When you think of your current problem, what judgments or messages do you feel society making? or,

What do you hear society saying? When in your life did you first hear that message?

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Internalized Stereotypes

Is there a stereotype about some aspect of your social identity? _____

When you think about that stereotype, what comes to mind (thoughts, feelings, memories)? How disturbing does it feel to you now (SUDs, 0-10)?

When in your life did you first hear that stereotype?

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Internalized Cultural Messages

I cannot trust _____ (certain "type" of people)

I am less than _____(member of group of people)

I am different than _____(certain others) and that makes me _____ (NC)

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CULTURECTOMIES

- During the culturectomy, the client separates the **true self** from the problematic internalized cultural message of what they **"are"** or **"should be"** by putting them in different hands (using the *two-hand interweave)*
- Using BLS sets to process the associations, the client explores the discrepancies.
- If client can see the distinction, then install the spontaneously derived version of **"I'm acceptable the way I am"** and move on
- If not, a float back can help identify prior memories related to the distress, which can then be reprocessed.
- Often, interweave questions and information assist adaptive resolution.

Robin Shapiro (2009, 2016)

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Making Prejudice a Clinical Issue

1. Is it my place, is it ethical?
2. Does this relate to therapy goals?
3. Is this prejudice affecting anyone else?
4. Will it do any good?
5. Is this the right time?
6. Can the therapeutic relationship handle it?
7. There is a lot of truth in that stereotype
8. It offends me, but I'm supposed put that aside.

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Strong Beliefs about Society

Do you have any strong beliefs about culture or society that you think are extreme, inflexible or problematic?

Prejudice

- Do you have any strong prejudices toward other people or types of people?
- How did you develop these beliefs?
- Do you see problems associated with having these prejudices?
- Do you want to better understand or change them?

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Running Into One's Own Prejudice

- Aging
- Becoming ill or handicapped
- Having a child with a drug problem
- Losing a job
- Needing help

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Evidence- Based
Prejudice Reduction Resource Strategies

Values driven reduction of bias
- enhancing egalitarian values and motivation to be nonbiased
- pairing the goal of being egalitarian with the presence of the stereotyped person
- reframing a proscribed stereotype (she's demanding) to a more socially permissible one (she's assertive)
- understanding and endorsing multiculturalism over a color-blind philosophy
- overtly rejecting stereotypic beliefs

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Evidence- Based
Prejudice Reduction Resource Strategies

Humanizing strategies
- activating the human care-giving system and related physiological responses
- adopting the other's perspective
- noticing the other's personal attributes
- creating positive body/motor reinforcement (simple smiles toward the other groups)
- noticing counter-stereotypic role models

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Evidence- Based
Prejudice Reduction Resource Strategies

Wall crumbling strategies include ways to break to divisions between people
- engaging in open discussion of intergroup prejudice vs. color-blind approaches
- noticing variability amongst people of a targeted group
- increasing intergroup knowledge
- decategorizing salient group boundaries
- regarding other group members as distinct individuals
- interacting in an interpersonal rather than group-based manner
- creating positive intergroup contact

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Evidence- Based
Prejudice Reduction Resource Strategies

Coming under one umbrella of common identity to build on a sense of in-groupness

• finding overarching shared identity
• identifying other groups with shared identities

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Targeting Stereotypes

Do you have any stereotypes you'd like to examine?

When did you first learned that belief?

Is there some part of you that believes something else?

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Other Possible Target Memories Associated with Prejudice Include:

Witnessing prejudice

Colluding with prejudice when it felt wrong

A current situation in which the client was aware of their prejudice

Stereotypic beliefs and when they were learned

Being criticized for being prejudice

Current triggers

Future fears related to exposure to prejudice

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Prejudice Reduction
Core components of successful strategies include:

(Divine)

Increasing motivation and decreasing defensiveness

Activating mindful attention

Providing nonbiased information

Strengthening prefrontal cortex awareness of nonbiased perceptions

Desensitizing the amygdala reactivity to triggers of prejudice

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Exploring Social Privilege and Social Position

Social privilege is an advantage or right which is available only to a particular person or group of people based upon unequal social position and opportunities.

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High Status Group Members can Identify NC's that are Linked to Internalized Cultural Message

For a high status/dominant group member

If I lose my status (power over)_____(low status group), I will be _____.

If I truly understand the experience of_____(low status group member), I will be _____.

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Exploring Social Disadvantages Social Advantages or Disadvantages Exploratory questions:

Have you ever felt any unfair advantage or disadvantage because of your cultural or social identity?

Do you have strong feelings about this topic that you'd like to work on?

Or, *Are there ways you take advantage of others because of your social position?*

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Exploring Social Advantages and Privilege

Would you like to explore issues related to any social advantages or privileges that you have in life?   If yes, then

When you think of one or more of these advantages, what comes to mind? Notice if you can appreciate your good fortune.

Notice what feelings come up when you think about those without those advantages? What picture comes to mind. How do you feel when you see that picture. Explore…

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Targeting Social Disadvantages

Would you like to explore issues related to any disadvantages that you have in life related to your any dimension of your social identity such as race/ethnicity, nationality, social class, sex, appearance, age, education, etc.? If yes, then:

When you think of another person or group of people who have advantages that you don't, what comes to mind? What specific image most clearly captures these advantages? How do you feel when you see that image?

Despite these disadvantages, are there anything aspects of your social identity you are grateful for?
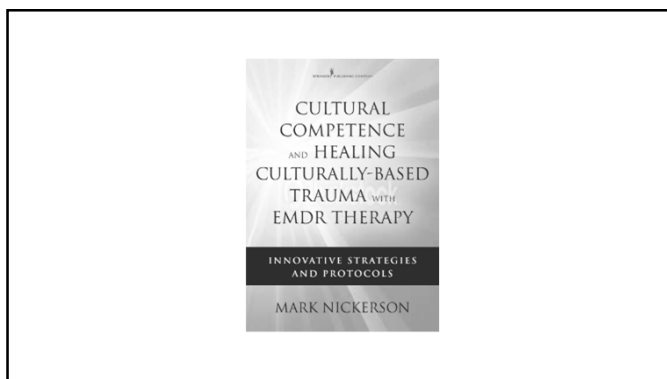
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Collection of Articles: Multiple Authors

Stereotypes and Prejudice: Essential Readings, (Stangor, C., 2000)

The Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination (Nelson, 2009)

 The Oxford Handbook of Multicultural Identity (Bebet-Martinez & Hong, 2014)

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