

Culturally Responsive Counsellors in the Field of Addiction

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Editorial

Being a culturally responsive counsellor is also mean the counsellor is competent in working with clients from various backgrounds. A competent counsellor is defined as the counsellor is able to approach counselling process from the context of the personal culture of the client [1]. Meaning that counsellors have to ensure that their values and biases do not override those of the clients in the session. When translate this competency in working with substance use disorder clients, addiction counsellors should approach addiction counselling by taking into account clients' cultural framework. While many factors can be fell under the cultural framework (e.g., race, ethnicity, language, spiritual, and sexual orientation etc.), cultural background also influence how drug addicts perceive addiction recovery or sobriety.

For example, individualism vs. collectivism. Individualism and collectivism are cultural dimensions used to understand how an individual perceives his or her relationship to the group of which he or she is a member [2]. The characteristics of an individual in individualist cultures includes self-contained, independent, and clearly bounded, meanwhile, an individual in collectivist culture includes enmeshed, interdependent, and contextualized [3]. These contextual characteristics of drug addict clients coming from individualism cultural dimension are different from collectivist clients in how they experience psychological distress and the way they perceive the importance of managing the symptoms.

This aspect of cultural dimensions in drug addict clients could also influence how they perceive addiction recovery or sobriety. Furthermore, the concept of resiliency may have some value when discussing addiction recovery or sobriety. It is important to remember that all diverse communities will not have the same definitions of resiliency and disparity may exist between individuals within the same

community. Especially resiliency could be a product of the environment surrounding of the drug addict clients. Therefore, this piece of information in clients is critical to be incorporated in treatment plan, as to ensure the counselling process is approached from the context of the personal culture of the client. Furthermore, psychological distress and well-being in recovery can only be understood within the cultural context in which they occur.

This includes valuing clients' choice in determining the goals and solutions in counselling, instead of the counsellor dictating the course of therapy. Some notable cultural strengths of either individualism (i.e., self-contained and independent) or collectivism (i.e., enmeshed and interdependent) cultural dimensions, may be used in therapy in order to produce significant changes in clients. Being a culturally responsive counsellor in the field of addiction should also mean to assist drug addict clients in identifying, expanding, and utilizing strengths that are rooted in their cultural context, rather than ignoring those contexts. To begin with, counsellors must demonstrate a great deal of respect towards their clients' unique understanding of themselves and life. This followed by using bracketing technique in distinguish their values and bias while working with drug addict clients with diverse cultural background. This technique must be done as deliberate efforts by addiction counsellors to ensure that their values and biases do not override those of the clients in the session.

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