EQUAL VOICES:
Considerations in Supporting Cultural Competence in Mediation

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“tóng chuáng yi méng”

Same bed, different dreams
Equal Voices

“CULTURE”

• Shared attitudes, values, goals, practices of a group; distinctions between and among groups

• Group adaptations to conditions of life
Beyond Culture
1976
Anchor Books

High-Context / Low-Context Communication

Edward T. Hall
1914 – 2009
Anthropologist
Equal Voices

Low-Context Culture

- Communication is direct
- Values “Individualism”
- Relationships Somewhat Transitory
- Logic, Rational-Thought Bias
- Direct Verbal interaction/Clear
- Expression Preferred
- Highly Verbal persons Favored

High Context Culture

- Communication is Indirect
- Values “Collectivism”
- Relationships are Permanent
- Feelings, Experiential Bias
- Facile with Nonverbal and Ambiguous Expression
- Highly Verbal Persons Disfavored
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-Context</th>
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<td>China</td>
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*Source: Hall and Hall (1995)*
Thoughts, Suggestions

✓ Seek understanding of parties’ cultural contexts
✓ Assess parties’ cultural awareness of one another
✓ Don’t assume what is said is being understood
✓ Explore issues within context of each party’s culture
✓ Discern cultural differences through expressions of body language, emotions and problem solving
✓ Model patience…don’t rush the process
The 4 Cognitive Components of Cultural Competence

- Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures.

- Cultural competence comprises four components: (a) Awareness of one's own cultural worldview, (b) Attitude towards cultural differences, (c) Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and (d) cross-cultural skills.

Pederson, P. (2011)
Diversity Training University International (2016)
• **Awareness**
  – Awareness is *consciousness* of one's personal reactions to people
Equal Voices

• Attitude

  – the difference between an awareness of cultural bias and beliefs in general and carefully *examining your own beliefs* and values about cultural differences
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- Knowledge
  - the awareness of how our values and beliefs about equality may be *inconsistent* with our behaviors

“You cannot perform in a manner inconsistent with the way you see yourself”

Zig Zigler
Equal Voices

• Skills

– *practicing* cultural competence

– *communication* is the fundamental tool by which people interact in mediation

– this includes gestures and other *non-verbal* communication
Cultural Competence Continuum

- Cultural Destructiveness
- Cultural Incapacity
- Cultural Blindness
- Cultural Pre-competency
- Cultural Competency
- Cultural Proficiency
• Fundamental Messages in CC

1. Awareness
2. Commitment to self-determination
3. Cultural respect
4. Cultural responsiveness
5. Cultural safety
6. Cross cultural practice and care
7. Self-reflection
COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Look at the chart and say the **COLOUR** not the word

**YELLOW**  **BLUE**  **ORANGE**  
**BLACK**  **RED**  **GREEN**  
**PURPLE**  **YELLOW**  **RED**  
**ORANGE**  **GREEN**  **BLACK**  
**BLUE**  **RED**  **PURPLE**  
**GREEN**  **BLUE**  **ORANGE**

Left – Right Conflict
Your right brain tries to say the colour but your left brain insists on reading the word.
• Cognitive Dissonance
  – What is Cognitive Dissonance?
  – Cognitive dissonance is a term used in psychology to describe the feeling of discomfort when one is confronted with facts or information that is in conflict with a firmly held belief. In a state of dissonance, people may sometimes feel "disequilibrium"
THE FOX AND THE GRAPES
Equal Voices- Cognitive Dissonance

• 1) Cognitive Dissonance Theory

• 2) Cognitive Dissonance Negative Affects

• 3) Cognitive Dissonance Awareness As We Mediate and Negotiate
Dimensions of Diversity Through The Lens of Cognitive Dissonance: Complexities to Consider

- Race (a social construct...)
- Gender
- Age
- Religion/Faith
- Socio-economic Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Ability-physical, mental, emotional
- Appearance
Lenses of Diversity and Our Competing Influences

Inclusion
The process of leveraging the power of differences and similarities to engage and value all people.

Diversity
The sum total of the characteristics and experiences that make each person unique; the full range of human and/or organizational differences & similarities.

Modified from design by Goldmuntz and Brown
Listening for the B.L.U.E.S When Encouraging Communication

• **B**egin where they are, not where you want them to be.

• **L**earn what they have gone through to get to this room.

• **U**nderstand how their past affects who they are today.

• **E**motionally relate to how they are feeling. Nourish a relationship with those in turmoil.

• **S**tay in the room even if you are feeling frustrated. Be present.


Livermore, D. Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The Real Secret to Success, 2d ed.(2015)


Pederson, P.B. The making of a culturally competent counselor. Online Readings in Psychology and Culture (Unit 10, Chapter 2), Center for Cross-Cultural Research, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington USA (2002)


OGEMID listserve (transnational dispute management)


Cognitive Dissonance - Wikipedia
