

*New Frontiers in Cultural Competency Training*

# **Do Cultural Competency Trainings Matter? The Promise of the Cultural Brokering Model**

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# Purpose

## **The goals of this workshop:**

- Point out to the limitation of traditional cultural competency training and discuss new professional development models
- Introduce “Cultural Brokering” training, a model shown to promote systems-change movements in disability inclusion
- Acquaint participants with new training tools that can be useful to the development of effective cultural competency



# What is Cultural Competency (CC)?

## *Client-Provider Definitions*

...commonly defined as having the awareness, knowledge, and skills to work effectively with diverse populations

... it is a mechanism to improve quality of service and outcomes for people from diverse backgrounds and reduce ethnic and racial disparities

## *Systems-Change Definitions*

... the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services; thereby producing better outcomes

(Davis, 1997)

# Key Questions

What is working?

What is not?



# What Do We Know About Cultural Competency Trainings...

- They are the most common approach for increasing provider awareness, knowledge and skills in understanding client cultural differences in the disability sector
- They vary in content, duration, method, and philosophy
- The field is characterized by divergent, contradictory approaches to the same problems


**As a result, today's disability professionals lack an established set of empirically-proven best practices**



# Key Issues and Challenges Facing CC Trainings

- No universally accepted definition or “tested” national guidelines of cultural competency
- CC definitions are difficult to operationalize into identifiable, observable, or measurable behaviors (Price and al., 2005 Geron, 2002)

The field continue to lack evidence-based CC guidelines and preferred practices in disability and rehabilitation, except for the culturally and linguistically appropriate standards (**CLAS**) (Office of Minority Health, 2001)



**Bottom Line:** We don't know if, or to what extent, current CC training impact disability outcomes in culturally and linguistically diverse client populations

# Why Do We Need Cultural Competency Training?

## To Address Known Disparities:

Many studies have revealed disparities and poorer outcomes among culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) minorities in different disability settings (Thomas et al. 2002; Brach et al., 2000; Roberts & Harris, 2002)

## Key Disparities:

- Limited access to disability services and opportunities
- Limited awareness of disability services potentially leading to secondary complications
- Less quality care and support once clients enter the disability service system
- Higher rates of attrition and missed follow-up appointments
- Poorer treatment and outcomes

*To address these issues, various laws and legislation has come into play.....*

# Broad-Based Efforts to Address Disability Disparities

## Legal Mandate

Section 21 of the 1992 U.S. Rehabilitation Act Amendments comes closest to acknowledging that people with disabilities, especially ethnic and linguistic minorities, are indeed a population experiencing disability disparities (Lewis et al., 2007)

## Funders and Organizations

Various groups are working to find ways to address culturally diverse and underserved populations (Lewis et al., 2007), including:

- The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR Section 21 Meeting, 2008)
- The Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (1992)
- The National Council on Disability (NCD Reports, 1993 to 2003)
- The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA, 1994)
- The National Association of Multicultural Concerns (NAMC, 1997)

**But more systems-change is needed.....**



# Our Biggest Frustration for Disability Professionals: Lack of Best Practices

“We are increasingly frustrated by the fact that we know a lot about what kinds of disparities there are in organizations...but we know nothing about how to reduce them.” (Kalev, 2010)



# Why System-Level Cultural Competency Matters: The Case of Mr. Tom

**The Case:** A Cook County public guardian filed a \$5 million suit against the Illinois director of mental health, charging that he kept a Chinese immigrant, Mr. Tom who is in his 50s, in custody for 27 years...

**A Breakdown in the System:** He was transferred to a state mental hospital where doctors could not give him a mental exam because he did not speak English and they could not speak Chinese. However, the doctors who examined Mr. Tom reported that he answered their questions in an “incoherent manner” and they diagnosed him as psychotic.

Although Mr. Tom was quiet and caused little trouble, he was placed in restraints to prevent him from wandering to a nearby ward that housed the only other Chinese-speaking patient.

**The Suit:** A federal court charged that the Illinois Department of Mental Health had never treated the patient. In fact, it was not until 25 years later, that they had found a Chinese-speaking psychologist to talk to him.

**(Modified from Dr. S. Sue’s presentation at UIC, 2009)**

# The Importance of Cultural Competency Trainings

- CC training is becoming increasingly important across various helping fields as the world becomes more diverse and integrated
- CC training is important in many disciplines, including psychology, social work, rehabilitation, nursing, public health, education, and other health professions
- Today, we need to expand our CC trainings from a client-provider level to a systems-level approach

# Does Cultural Competency Training Work?

## ○ Yes

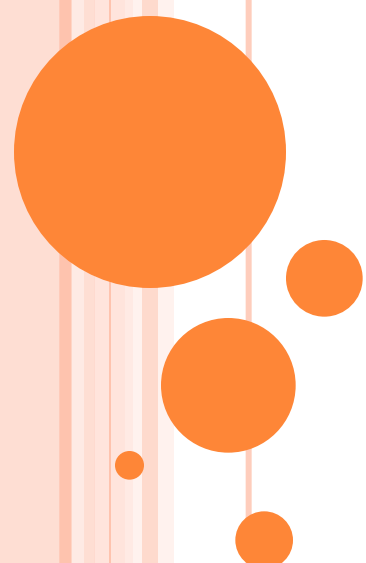
- Provider level competency does increase
- Some believe that CC is capable of creating systems change
- Subtle changes have been seen which indicated that CC is working.
- If combined with other methods it can lead to long-term impacting results.

## ○ No

- Too much focus on providers; not enough focus on systems level approaches
- CC training is often viewed as “just” mandatory work- place training
- Unfortunately, little evidence has been collected on client-level outcomes



## What Does Not Work?

- One size does not fit all: One model cannot be created for all ethnocultural persons with disabilities
  - Providing CC trainings to avoid lawsuits
  - Short-term, one-time, or once-yearly trainings
  - Trainings that do not involve active participation, active listening, and critical learning
  - Cultural assumptions/stereotyping
  - Inconsistent standards or guidelines
- 

# What Works?

- Cultural humility on the part of providers
- An assets/strengths-based approach
- Remembering that CC development is a continuous process
- Long-term continuing education programs
- Community-based participatory programs
- Collaboration with other diverse organizations

# The Need for a Systems-Level CC Framework

- Many researchers have developed provider-level case management frameworks to cultural competency, but have fallen short of addressing client-level outcomes

The “Cultural Brokering” model has been shown to be effective in providing BOTH a systems-level and customized approach to disability disparity issues in underserved immigrant communities

# DEFINING CULTURAL BROKERING...

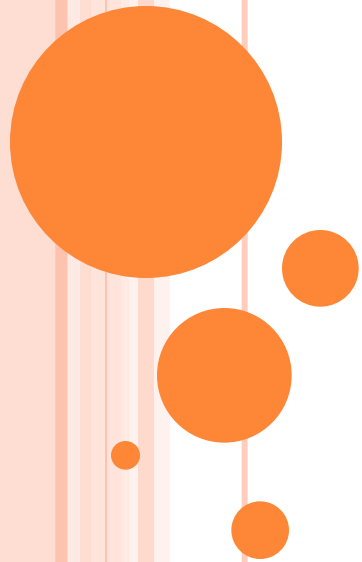
“An act of bridging, linking, or mediating among groups or persons of differing cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change.”

(Jezewski, 1990)





So, can “cultural brokering” help bridge the service gaps that exist among culturally diverse individuals with disabilities, their families and the disability system?



# Some Key Benefits of Cultural Brokering

- Improves Access and Use
- Improves Opportunity
- Better Communication
- Better Adherence & Follow Through

**Bottom Line: Produces Better Quality of Life Outcomes and Therefore Reduces Disparities....**

THUS, A CULTURAL BROKER IS:

“A go-between, one who  
advocates on behalf of  
another individual or  
group”

(Jezewski & Sotnik,  
2005)

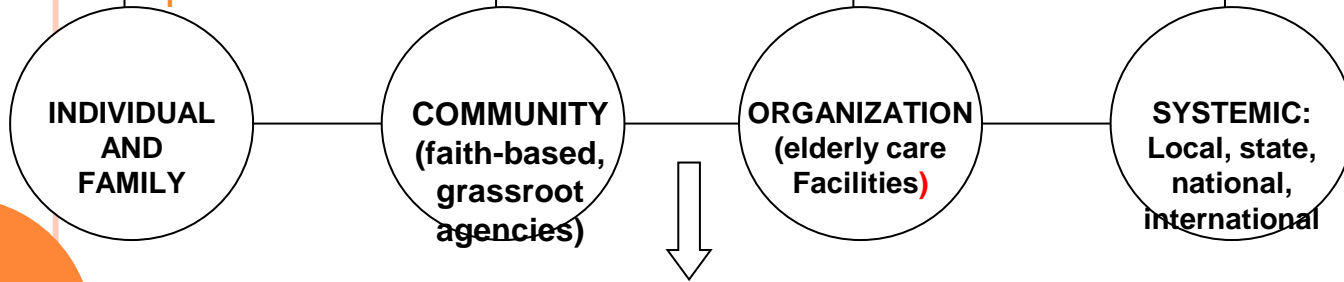


# Systems-Level Cultural Brokering Approach

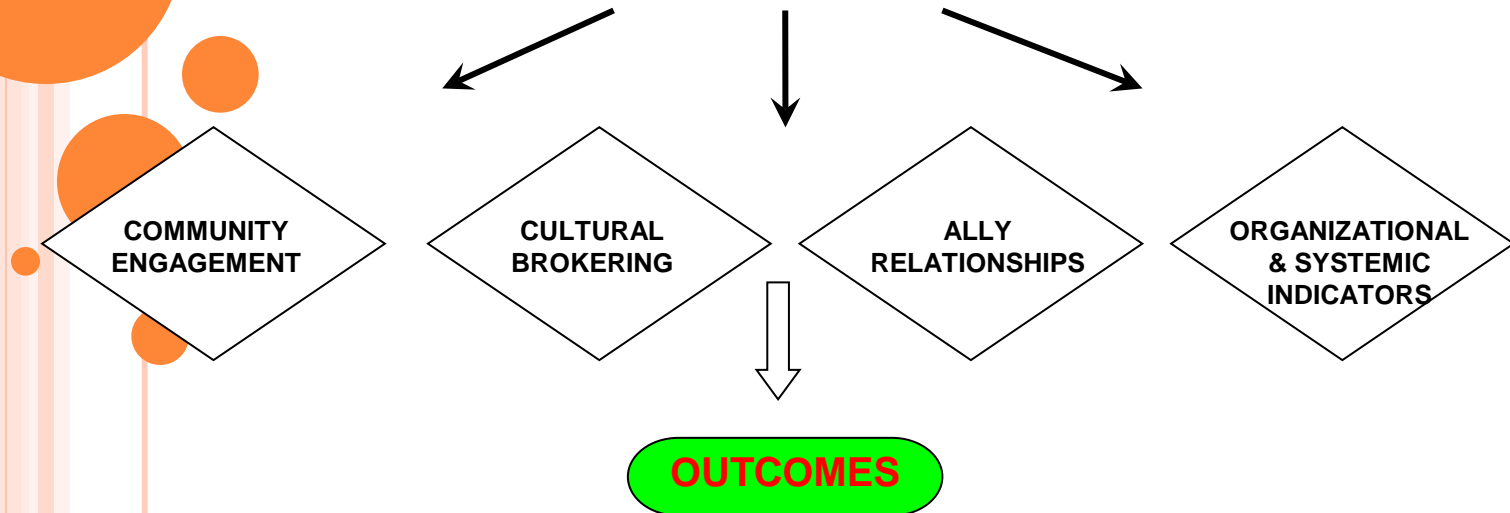
## VARIABLES

- Ethnicity
- Communication
- Language
- Family Structure
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Age
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Spirituality/Religion
- Politics
- Power/Powerlessness
- Economics
- Bureaucracy
- Stigma
- Geographic location
- Neighborhood
- Social Class
- Education
- Networks & Connections
- Time
- Health/Disability
- Cultural Background
- Culture

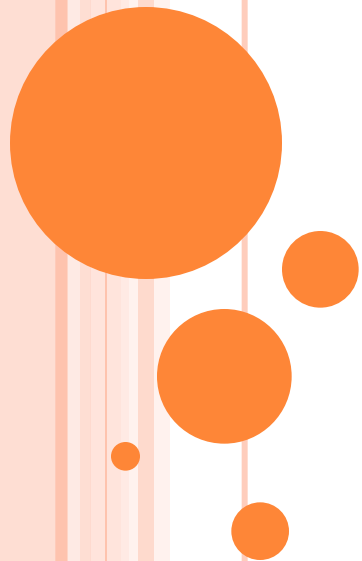
## Step 1: Desire to Connect to Resources



## CULTURAL COMPETENCY INTERVENTIONS



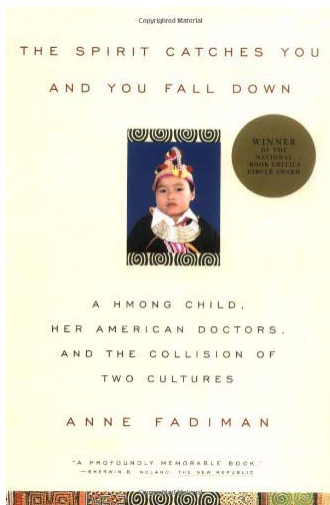
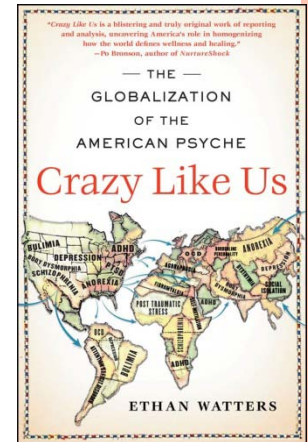
**A Concluding Recommendation:  
Cultural Brokering Interventions  
Should Play a Greater Role Across  
All Disability Sectors and Levels**



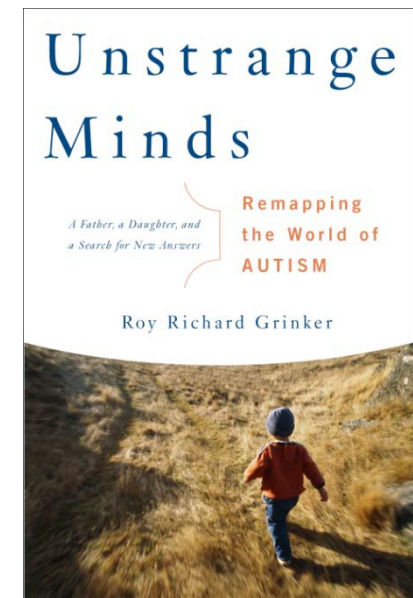
# Culture Brokering Matters!

## Some Recent Reports and Books

**Lift Every Voice:** Modernizing Disability Policies and Programs to Serve a Diverse, National Council on Disability, December 1, 1999



**Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity**  
A Supplement to **Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General (1999)**



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